"A Battle of Wits": Tubbian Entrapment in Swift

Thesis
presented to the Faculty of Arts
of
the University of Zurich
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Accepted on the recommendation of
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University of Zurich Students' Press, 2006

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

> I shall hardly be able to do Justice to my Master's Arguments and Expressions; which must needs suffer by my Want of Capacity, as well as by a Translation into our barbarous *English*.[1]

I would like to express my gratitude towards everybody who gave me their support and understanding during my work on this study. The actual point of departure of my project was based on coursework, discussions and encouragement on the part of my advisor, Professor Allen Reddick Ph. D., English Department at the University of Zurich. This is where my fascination with Swift's satirical strategies and imagery was inspired. Many thanks for the continual support I was allowed to experience there.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my family and friends, who were always there when I seemed to be stuck with my project. The project was, in Swift's sense, a battle of wits, a bobbing with tubs, a battle and game, that is.

Andreas Frischknecht
St. Gallen, January 2006

[1] Swift, Jonathan. *Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First Surgeon, and Then a Captain of Several Ships.* (1726). *Gulliver's Travels: Complete, Authoritative Text with Biographical and Historical Contexts, Critical History, and Essays from Five Contemporary Critical Perspectives.* Ed. Christopher Fox. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995, p. 224. Subsequent quotations of *Gulliver's Travels* are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text, with the abbreviation *GT* and page number.

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INTRODUCTION

"TO VEX THE WORLD RATHER THEN DIVERT IT": ENTRAPMENT IN SWIFT

> At a reopening of Dublin's Gaiety Theatre in 1984, without announcing what he was doing, actor Peter O'Toole read from the *Modest Proposal* and "prompted a mass walk-out of dignitaries." In a newspaper report on the incident, "O'Toole Defends 'Disgusting' Reading," the actor claimed that he wanted to capture Swift's savage indignation by reciting a piece that had "a little something to offend everybody."[2]

Jonathan Swift has never ceased to shock. As this Dublin episode demonstrates, Swift is still able to move his audience quite literally. Swift's satires have always exhibited a remarkable quality of attracting, puzzling and insulting their readers. Fascination, confusion, offence: these are the stages readers often experience in Swift, and frequently in just such an order. In my approach to satire in Swift, I will focus on analysis of authorial strategies accounting for such strong responses: close study of the literally captivating character of Swiftian satire will reveal its intention and aim, the effect of reader entrapment.

A considerable part of such strong responses to Swift is based on the general fact that, when reading satire, the task is not as much to find an opinion or belief as to discover the complexity of what it takes to form an opinion. Readers of Swift had better be on the alert and build their views with care, for it is a well-known and consequently much-cited Swiftian remark that his basic objective is to "vex the world rather then divert it" (Swift to Pope, Sep. 29. 1725)[3]. Diversion and vexation: one among the most crucial questions commentators have been tempted to ask is whether it is possible to explain the apparent binary impression of fascination and offence Swift's works leave on many readers. It is an undisputed fact that Swift's readers were, and keep being, attracted and bewildered by the frequently strange or even repulsive rhetoric and imagery he employs. Why is it so troublesome for many readers to cope with Swift's imagery, the often wildly abundant visions, satiric viewpoints and perspectives he provides in his major polemical prose? This study aims at analysis of the battle Swift engages his readers in. I argue that diversion and vexation, as ironically stated by Swift himself in the famed quote

[2] *Toronto Globe and Mail* (October 28, 1984) (quoted in Fox 7).

[3] *Correspondence of Jonathan Swift.* Ed. H. Williams. 5 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963-65; III, p. 102. Subsequent quotations from Swift's correspondence are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text, with the abbreviation *Corr.* and volume and page number.

above, form an inextricable pair and constituent of Swift's satiric technique and strategy. In this sense, it is an objective of my approach to show why readers' difficulties are indeed not without very good reasons.

How can it be explained that satire, which on a basic level is aimed at specific, to a greater or lesser degree openly declared targets, may evoke such strong feelings of disorientation in its reading audience? Swift describes such targets and scenes of folly in *A Tale of a Tub*, where he mocks and attacks "those Committees of Senators who are silent in the *House* and loud in the *Coffee-House*, where they nightly adjourn to chew the Cud of Politicks, and are encompass'd with a Ring of Disciples, who lye in wait to catch up their Droppings."[4] In "Thoughts on Religion", Swift argues that "Every man, as a member of the Commonwealth, ought to be content with the possession of his own opinion in private, without perplexing his Neighbour or disturbing the Public."[5] Yet, paradoxically, "perplexing his neighbour" and "disturbing the public" is exactly what Swift, the political pamphleteer and satirist, does. Hence, there is a paradoxical Swiftian involvement in the activities of those coffee-house "Senators" and their "Disciples" he condemns. Such paradox remains to be exposed to close scrutiny.

Throughout his career, Swift enjoyed parody of questionable and loud "coffee-house wit." Swift rejoiced in imitating the voices of various species of would-be wits and giving them to his satiric *personae*.[6] In the "Apology", one of the various prefaces to his *Tale of a Tub*, Swift explains that parody is when "*the Author personates the Style and Manner of other Writers, whom he has a mind to expose*" (*Tale* 267). In fact, Swift's application of the concept of parody was very influential. It greatly contributed to the establishment of the notion of parody mainly meant as stylistic imitation intended to ridicule. Yet, it is important to note that Swift's satire is more than this: Swiftian parody requires from the reader critical analysis of issues which the parodic attack raises. It is designed to shock and offend in order to create awareness, with the consequence of frequently meeting with reproach. Not unlike the scene of contemporary coffee-houses, Swift's satires are full of would-be-wit *personae*, who in more or less sophisticated ways struggle for prominence, thus creating veritable turmoil or even battle among themselves. In addition, there is also a battle between Swift behind them and the reader. It is this battle which constitutes the main concern of my study.

On an initial and overt plane, Swiftian satire never leaves any doubt about what kinds of people are explicitly being satirized. Among Swift's favourite and most frequent targets rank easily detectable and quickly

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[4] Swift, Jonathan. *A Tale of a Tub*. (1704) *A Tale of a Tub*. *To Which is Added The Battle of the Books and the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. Ed. A. C. Guthkelch and N. D. Smith. Oxford: Clarendon, 1958, p. 303. Subsequent quotations of *A Tale of a Tub* are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text, with the abbreviation *Tale* and page number.

[5] *Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*. 14 vols. Ed. Herbert J. Davis et al. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939-74; XI, p. 131. Subsequent quotations of *Prose Writings* are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text, with the abbreviation *PW*, volume and page number.

[6] As Michael Hunter notes, coffee houses were also the most popular meeting places of *virtuosi*, men of various interests and amateur scientists, as well as members of the scientific Societies of London and Dublin, which did some damage to the reputation of the latter (81).

identifiable contemporary victims such as various species of Grub Street hacks, religious bigots, spiteful clerics, scientific enthusiasts, humanistic optimists, the Moderns, only to name a few. Thus, on a very general level, it can be stated that Swift attacks those who, mostly in the name of reason, corrupted what were in his view proper standards of interpretation.

The year 1668 witnessed publication of Joseph Glanvill's *Plus Ultra*, a polemic in support of Modern science, whose proud subtitle reads like a description and defence of Modern achievement: "The Progress and Advancement of Knowledge Since the Days of *Aristotle*. In an Account of some of the most Remarkable Late Improvements of *Practical*, *Useful* Learning." As Michael Hunter states, such claim "provides a helpful approach to the ideology of Restoration science" (8) and the terms "practical" and "useful" demonstrate the fact that the "hope for the ameliorations of life is intrinsic to the science of the time" (9). Swift generally mistrusted such aims, as well as the hubristic aspiration to comprehend the physical nature of the universe in both its minute aspect and its vast magnitude. Enlightenment had brought to prominence notions of René Descartes' (1596-1650) rationalism and mechanical philosophy, John Locke's (1632-1704) empiricism and Isaac Newton's (1642-1727) astronomical system, all of which met with Swift's deep mistrust. Swift was very sceptical about the scientific research by foreign and English philosophers and *virtuosi*, persons of various interests, that is, who admired such exponents as Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), pioneering English champion of Modern science and development. Bacon had proposed a new system of learning, based on notions of dynamic improvement and rational empiricism, thus expressing optimistic Enlightenment beliefs in man's ability of self-perfection, and designed to forward practical knowledge for the benefit of all mankind.[7] Observation of natural phenomena, experimentation and systematization of one's findings were considered superior to obsolete notions of Medieval scholasticism, based on the works of Aristotle (Hunter 9/10). In his *New Organon* (1620), Bacon articulates the Modern notion of progress as the most important argument of hope, based on new research as well as improvement "from the errors of past time, and of the ways hitherto trodden," for,

> [I]f during so long a course of years men had kept the true road for discovering and cultivating sciences, and had yet been unable to make further progress therein, bold doubtless and rash would be the opinion that further progress is possible. But if the road itself has been mistaken, and men's labour spent on unfit objects, it follows that the difficulty has its rise not in things themselves, which are not in our power, but in the human understanding, and the use and application thereof, which admits of remedy and medicine. It will be of great

[7] Still, it was John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), which, in its chief focus on questions of cognition and philosophy of mind and its "systematic tracing of our ideas to their empirical origins," brought empiricist notions to lasting popularity (Nidditch viii-ix).

> use therefore to set forth what these errors are; for as many impediments as there have been in times past from this cause, so many arguments are there of hope for the time to come. (I; 94; 92)[8]

Bacon's works, including his extremely influential *Of the Proficience and Advancement of Learning* (1605), show a new scientific interest in the natural world; a marked trait is Bacon's confident reclassification of knowledge and especially the idea of progress effected by scientific invention, technical and mechanical innovation, along with the general optimistic claim that human history constitutes progressive movement, thus improvement, and not circular movement, repetition, as for instance in Aristotle (Aldridge 76).

The frontispiece to Bacon's *Instauratio Magna* (1620), which introduces his *New Organon*, depicts a ship passing the Pillars of Hercules, which were traditionally located at the Strait of Gibraltar and believed to mark the end of the known Ancient world, and thus also stand as a symbol for the limits of human reach. In Bacon's employment, the same image is intended to represent an analogy between voyages of discovery and scientific research and progress, as he does in *The Advancement of Learning*. There, Bacon addresses James I as follows:

> For why should a few received authors stand up like Hercules' columns, beyond which there should be no sailing or discovering, since we have so bright and benign a star as your Majesty to conduct and prosper us? To return therefore where we left, it remaineth to consider of what kind those acts are which have been undertaken and performed by kings and others for the increase and advancement of learning [...]. (II, 1, 73)

It is clear that the main point Bacon's imagery makes is that he believes the limits of Ancient learning will be left behind by Modern progress.

Swift simply did not believe in such proud notions of progress, which motivated scientific research and thus such organizations as the Royal Society. The Society was established in 1660, the year of Charles II's Restoration; it was granted the royal charter in 1662, was mostly devoted to the study of natural philosophy, and drew together not only the pre-eminent of learned chemists, physicians, architects, but also men of letters and musicians (Hunter 32). Swift strongly disapproved of the proud Modern notion that an author could produce new admirable pieces of learning by mere use of his faculty of reason, as well as mechanical classification of natural phenomena, and did not need handed-down learning and morality as a base. Swift was convinced that humanistic learning was indispensable for a writer, an attitude which is demonstrated and embodied in his work and his reading.[9] His general philosophical stance was uncompromising: "Swift

[8] *New Organon* alluded to Aristotle's corpus of logical treatises, the *Organon*, which Bacon claimed to surpass (Hunter 13).

[9] Ehrenpreis offers a list of books read by Swift in 1697 and 1698, thus showing his tendencies

assumed that the central position belonged to the accepted moralists, from Plutarch to Montaigne, who warned men against the frailty of their nature and praised the stern but humble pursuit of duty," leading to his conviction that both scholastic metaphysics and the Modern mechanistic systems of Descartes and Hobbes were "useless speculations beside the irrefutable validity of moral wisdom" (Ehrenpreis II 192).

In addition, Swift was as sceptical of theological innovations and disputes as he was apprehensive of the new science. Swift the satirist's viewpoint as conservative, mingled with his beliefs as clergyman and thus representative of the Anglican Church, is expressed in a "conflation of the epistemological and the theological," a very typical trait in Swift. This leads to a resulting satiric onslaught on both transgressions against revelation as expressed in scripture, the book of God, and natural phenomena, the book of nature:

> Dissenters and religious enthusiasts are taken to task for their misreading of Scripture, for their corrupt religious doctrine which they erroneously claim to be based on Scripture and reason. The natural philosophers are accused of some similar hermeneutic sin; only, they have committed their interpretive transgressions against the proper interpretive standard of the book of nature. (Affentranger 10)

It is impossible to read Swift without taking into consideration this critical hermeneutic context. First, it was relatively easy in Swift's time to attack scientific activities such as experimental philosophy, for by the time Swift wrote his *Tale of a Tub*, the activities of experimental philosophers and other Moderns were still in their cradle and had not yet been of very significant realistic use for the common citizen's every-day life (despite such innovations as the microscope, telescope, thermometer, barometer or air-pump, which had been developed in early and mid-seventeenth century) (Hunter 10). Hunter argues, in this context, that many "authors have anachronistically assumed a cultural hegemony for science too early," that in Swift's time "a 'scientific ideology' hardly existed except among unrepresentative enthusiasts," and that "support for natural philosophy was haphazard, enthusiasm sporadic, hostility widespread, and apathy and indifference dominant" (193). Swift's satire draws from such scepticism, originally stemming from still unresolved discussions about how true meaning could be derived. Almost two centuries before, such religious questions had led to the Reformation and in Swift's time they were far from settled. Ehrenpreis draws the picture of the religious landscape in Swift's time as follows:

> If we consider the possibilities available to religious men, for instance, in 1696, we may say that those who rejected

and preferences: political and ecclesiastical history make up for one third of the titles; the classics from Homer to Petronius amount to less than a quarter. Travel literature, French *belles-lettres* such as Voiture or Fontenelle, works on various spiritual aspects of religion. Swift read Lucretius three times, Virgil twice, Lucius Florus, based on Livy, three times (175/76).

> the Church of England could be either Roman Catholics or Dissenters; and if Dissenters, they were most likely to be Presbyterian. They might also belong to other Protestant sects: Independents (or Congregationalists), Baptists, Anabaptists, Quakers, and so forth; or they might doubt the divinity of Christ and be Socinians or deists. Nobody admitted to atheism ("free-thinking"), and hardly anybody would publicly accept the name of deist; in ordinary usage the type of great mystic, Boehme, was classified as maniac. Though most of these groups felt small respect for one another, the Calvinist sects and the Roman Catholic Church were normally conceived as the most extreme opposites along the same axis. While the Roman Catholics made the bulk of the people in Ireland, they were as powerless there as in England, where they constituted a docile minority. Among the sects which acted as dangerous, expanding rivals of the Established Church, the Presbyterians (who were usually the ones intended by "nonconformists" or "Dissenters") were easily the strongest. (II 191)

Enforcement of the 1662 Act of Uniformity had excluded Dissenters such as Presbyterians, Independents, Babtists and smaller sects from the Anglican Church (Keeble 116). Despite determined and uncompromising persecution of Nonconformists in the 1670s and 1680s, the number of Dissenters had grown, which was observed sceptically and with more than displeasure by Swift, the uncompromising champion of the Anglican belief.

Swift perceived of Dissent as a great danger to the established Anglican Church and he was equally intolerant of Catholics. During all of his writing career, Swift wrote forceful defences of the Anglican Church in Ireland, which was in a precarious situation, as a consequence of Ireland's turbulent history: "churches destroyed by the 'fantatick zeal' of the Puritans, houses in disrepair, church lands constantly vulnerable to successive conquerors, parishes appropriated to the crown, impoverishment so severe that in many cases up to five or six parishes might be forced into amalgamation" (Walsh 2003, 165). The Battle of the Boyne (1690) had seriously influenced the Irish political and religious landscape: English Parliament had replaced the King as ultimate authority on Irish questions. The same Parliament enforced the Penal Laws against Catholics and hindered the growth of a large Protestant population by preventing the export of Irish cloth, in the interest of English clothiers in 1698. Anglicans, about one third of Irish Protestants, were allowed to keep Nonconformists out of public offices. Swift was in favour of penal legislation such as the Sacramental Test Act, introduced in Ireland in 1704, which excluded Dissenters from public offices if they did not accept the authority of the Church of Ireland (Higgins 36). He also supported the Penal Laws against the Irish Roman Catholic majority. These acts were based on tests, which compelled office holders to receive Anglican communion, swear allegiance to the Monarch, accept the primacy of the Anglican Church and renounce

Catholic doctrine (Morrill 2000, 203).

Swift's first clerical appointment had brought him to the isolated parish of Kilroot, County Antrim. Louis Landa points out that Swift did not enter "a healthy or flourishing diocese" and that when Swift was instituted "the parish church of Lisburn was serving as the cathedral, the old cathedral of Down having been destroyed in the sixteenth century" (10). Swift in fact found himself at a neglected outpost of Anglicanism surrounded by Scottish Presbyterians, who had numerously immigrated to the north of Ireland during the reigns of James I and Charles I, "hostile to the episcopacy and the Church of England liturgy, and vigorously favored by King William and his ministers" (Walsh 2003, 162). The Anglican parish of Kilroot was, like the whole of Antrim, in a desperate state, as a 1693 report on the "lamentable condition" of the Dioceses Down and Connor suggests: the north of Ireland saw "the clergy wrongfully dispossessed of their glebe lands, incumbents restrained from claiming their legal rights for fear of offending their patrons or parishioners, non-residence widely prevalent, churches falling into despair and ruin" (Landa 11). In stark contrast to this was Belfast, only a couple of miles from Kilroot, which presented itself as "the very centre of the strength and wealth of Presbyterianism" (Landa 20). It was in the desolation of Kilroot that Swift continued his work on *A Tale of a Tub*, and his great satire on religion there is, no doubt, deeply influenced by his Kilroot impressions, especially nurturing his prejudices against Dissent (Landa 19). As Landa argues, Swift's "jealous guardianship" which he exercised over the "actual physical possessions of the Church," as well as his "keen recognition of the vital relation between worldly prosperity and spiritual health in the Church" are "matters which cannot be emphasized too much in any consideration of him as a churchman" (11).

It is generally essential for any understanding of Swift to appreciate his deep commitment to the Church of Ireland, thus the Anglican or Established Church in Ireland, which built the basic foundation for his stance on most topics. Swift's situation in Kilroot is of relevance to his later treatment and attitude towards Dissent, for he must have perceived of the Presbyterians surrounding his little parish as a huge threat to established faith.

Swift's second appointment brought him to Laracor, in the Diocese of Meath. Circumstances were similar there, with one notable difference: whereas in Kilroot, most of the population had been Presbyterian, Swift encountered a majority of Catholics in Meath (Landa 35). Although Swift enjoyed the country life and managed considerably to improve the state of his parish in Laracor, he still had to face the fact that, again, he found the members of the Anglican Church greatly outnumbered and neglected. This seemed to corroborate the general agreement among the Irish clergy that, as an anonymous author states, "The Present E[stablishmen]t seems to me in a tottering Way, and things ripening gradually to its Dissolution."[10] It is quite clear that his appointments in Down and Connor as well as Meath are crucial to the ways Swift perceived of the state of the Church of Ireland (Landa 35).

[10] *A Letter from a Gentleman in the Country to His Son at the University, dissuading Him from going into Holy Orders*. (1737) (Quoted by Landa 190).

Such experience accounts for Swift's absolute intolerance concerning Protestant factions, Catholicism, and religious matters in general.[11]

Swift also completely disagreed with new theological models and creeds of his time such as Latitudinarianism or Deism. Latitudinarianism, with marked exponents such as Archbishop John Tillotson, held a tolerant, undogmatic view of the choice of worship and in the early 18th century pleaded for admittance of Dissenters to the Anglican Church. In Swift's view possibly even more dangerous was Deism as expressed in Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *De Veritate* (1624), Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning Virtue* (1699) or Mathew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1730), with its search for common principles in all religions and its belief in everything, including religion, being subject to precise examination by human reason (Williams 1939, 81).[12]

Such context serves as a reminder of Swift's strong, uncompromising views and deep-rooted conservatism, for the radicalism and parody of his satires sometimes almost lures us into interpretation of Swift as modern democrat and pluralist, which of course is completely out of place. Or as Marcus Walsh states,

> Swift grew up in the aftermath of the Civil War, when memories of the overthrow of monarchy and the established church, the death of a king and years of bloodshed and violence, were fresh. […] Though his first publications belong to the opening years of the eighteenth century, Swift may properly be seen as a writer whose mind was deeply and permanently influenced by the events and ideas of the seventeenth century. (2003, 170)

Nevertheless, the questions remains whether Swiftian satire is reduced to such realms of (contemporary) theological and scientific disputes. Is it indeed the case that there is a possibility of laying back and with great relish observing the display of Swift's adroit attacks against a limited set of types of victims, mostly situated in the realms of religion and science? As has been pointed out, the experience many readers of Swift have is different.

In order to do justice to the nature of satire in Swift, any analysis of Swift's satiric vision ought to try to avoid any such simplification of the complexities of

[11] Highly ironically, Swift himself was at times suspected of being a Jacobite, due to his Tory connections and friends suspected of Jacobitism, such as Alexander Pope, Knightley Chetwode or Thomas Sheridan (Higgins 8). Hence, some of Swift's friendships "added to a suspicion of Jacobite leanings," especially after Bolingbroke and Bishop Atterbury's joining the Pretender in France (Elias 70). In 1715, Swift's letters were even intercepted on suspicion of Jacobite sympathies (Nokes xviii).

[12] The beliefs held by Deists (the so-called "Five Articles") were (1) the belief in the existence of one universal Deity, (2) the duty to worship this Deity (3) to practice morality, (4) the duty to repent of and abandon sin and (5) divine reward in this world and the next. These were thought to contain the basis of primitive Christianity and all religions. Ironically, Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke, who was member of the Tory ministry under Queen Anne and friend of Swift's, was a Deist.

its effects. At the same time, any reading of Swift should aim at providing an alternative to absolute interpretative pessimism and still appreciate the perpetually subversive character of Swift's major satirical works. The result of such interpretative balancing is a battle between Swift and the reader:

> Clearly, Swift enjoyed his control of irony: enjoyed its flexibility, its complex destructiveness, his own mastery of it. Clearly, too, he expects his readers to enjoy it. The irony is not *only* a battle, but a game: a civilized game, at that, since irony is by its very nature civilized, presupposing both intelligence, and at least some type of moral awareness. The "war" is a battle of wits […]. (Dyson 66)

Thus, speaking of Swift's captivating literary skills points us to the other aspect of Swiftian satire, inextricably linked with it, which is the reader's captivity, constituting a crucial part in the experience of reading Swift, and of major interest here.

For, where exactly does Swift's satire stop? Does his habitually harsh rhetoric in fact stop anywhere at all? Do not, on the contrary, most readers experience at some private moment the rather uneasy feeling that the satire attacks not only its obvious targets, but in fact continues, and also includes the reader himself? It is very typical of satire in Swift that it manages to *personally* affect the majority of its readers. Of course, conflicts run deep when Swift begs crucial hermeneutic questions. The doubts Swiftian satire evokes about misrepresentation and misinterpretation comprise too generally all human existence, intellectual as well as spiritual, as not to draw many readers into impasse and confusion. However, who would be fool enough – or was it knave? – to rank himself among Swift's satiric *persona*e or the contemporary characters and types he satirizes? In the end, who would embrace the *personae*'s hyperbolically depicted aberrations, thus joining obvious Swiftian objects of ridicule and satiric attack? Swift himself suggests that "next to taming or binding a Savage-Animal, the best Service you can do the Neighborhood, is to give warning, either to arm themselves, or not to come in its Way" (*The Examiner* No. 38, April 26, 1711; *PW* III, 144).

Yet, how exactly should readers of Swift, "arm themselves"? After all, any reader of Swift has been lured into neglecting the warning above, for he does not in the least avoid Swift's satiric "Savage-Animal," but, on the contrary, is bound to confront it directly. Ironically, this is exactly Swift's intention. Swift creates confrontation with the satiric beast, and leaves it up to his reader to produce adequate weapons to make a stand.

General philosophical, political and religious satire is one element in Swift; a second one is personal attack; a third, reader entrapment. Swift is proficient in all of them. I am interested in studying the effects Swift's satiric writing has on such readers who expect themselves to be simply invited by Swift to shake their heads and laugh along with him at contemporary aberrations in religion or science. These readers, too, will meet with moments of entrapment in Swift. It is in the nature of my approach to Swift that many of the ideas I shall study, develop and apply to Swift are greatly indebted to

general notions originated in the field of literary theory summarized as reader-response criticism. The satiric technique and strategy of reader entrapment always involve the author's calculation of his reader's response as well as the reader's active production of meaning within the reading process, which is basically the focal point of reception theory. Reader entrapment involves, or even enforces, the reader's participation in and actualization of Swift's satiric texts. Swift's use of satiric paradox and hyperbole, intended to entrap, forces the reader to try to fill in the gaps in the text, because Swift the author is conspicuously absent and does not intervene. In this trait of forcing his readers into participation, Swift thus naturally also directs any study on reader entrapment into the fields of Wolfgang Iser's seminal *Der Akt des Lesens* (1976), in which such terms and ideas as "actualizing" and "fill in the gaps" in texts were first developed.

I would like to draw from general notions of reception theory in the broader context of theorizing the ways Swift's satire functions and is intended to be received by its readers. My main interest lies in the ways readers react to Swift's challenge, without focusing on the more narrow applications as expanded in reception theory of the original Constance school with exponents such as Wolfgang Iser or Hans Robert Jauss (*Rezeptionsästhetik*). Historical changes affecting the broader reading public will be a factor, but not the main focus here. Yet, Iser's notion of texts as partially open, as providers of prompts but not themselves direct conveyors of meaning, is very relevant and helpful for my approach. The same applies to Iser's emphasis on the process of interaction of text and reader. The reader's response plays a major role in the creation of meaning out of text. As Iser states in the much quoted passage from *Der Implizierte Leser* (1972),

> Wenn der Blick in den Spiegel dem Leser die Möglichkeit zur Selbstkorrektur bietet, dann wird die Rolle fassbar, die ihm hier zugedacht ist. Wahrt er seine Chance, so kann das nur heissen, dass er Seiten an sich selbst gewärtigt, von denen er bisher nichts wusste, oder – schlimmer noch – von denen er nichts hatte wissen wollen, um schliesslich zu erkennen, dass sich das richtige Verhalten erst aus der Überwindung des gewohnten ergibt. Das aber besagt: richtiges Verhalten mag sich zunächst nur als potentielle Gegenläufigkeit gegen das alltägliche Situationsverhalten des Menschen einzustellen; es ist gegenwärtig in der Störung habitueller Reaktionen. (66)

Iser describes text as a correcting glass for its readers. Hence, Iser's view of text, reader response and potential "self-correction" brings us close to satiric concepts, for it is frequently an inherent intention of satire to prompt realization of sides of ourselves which we have not known, or which we have "not wanted to know about." The fact that, in this context, "correct mode of conduct first involves shaking off the familiar" and is "present only in the disturbance of habitual reactions" is also a helpful notion, for satire often makes the familiar strange to provoke a response. In addition to this, Iser's

theory corresponds with frequent observations among Swift critics of the openness of Swift's satires. As Ann Cline Kelly puts it, "Swift is a miraculous well of narrative possibilities that can be dipped from endlessly but never runs dry" (2002, 10). Iser considers the meaning and correction a reader actively creates out of a literary text to be restricted within certain limits prompted and required by the text itself: "Verlockt ihn der Text dazu, sich die Motivation des richtigen Verhaltens im Blick auf die erzählte Situation selbst vorzustellen, so macht sich der Leser die notwendige Korrektur bewusst, die als solche nicht ohne Rückwirkungen auf seine eigene Bewussheit bleiben kann" (67). Prompted, required, or even enforced, would in my view be a correct application of this claim to the process of reader entrapment as I perceive it in Swift.

Iser's notions of the text leaving or offering space for the reader's interpretation and correction is useful in my approach, yet it would be highly problematic to apply the openness of text as suggested in the quotation above directly to Swift's satires, for this would mean running the danger of losing track of the basic nature of 17th/18th century satire. Iser's approach has to be modified to an extent to, on the one hand, avoid a total interpretative vacuum, and on the other, to still appreciate the frequent characteristic openness of satire in Swift. It is my claim that there are moments in Swift's satire where such openness does exist, and is meant to, in order to entrap readers, and to provoke a response. Satire in Swift has a tendency to minimise the function of interpretative limits, and even open up in its radicalism interpretative moves which are totally opposed to Swift the satirist's aims. This paradoxical trait, stemming from the extreme negativity of satire, is another main point of interest in my approach.

There is yet another marked difference between Iser's approach and the realities in Swift. In Iser's theory, the reader is a liberal humanist, ready to profit from the experience and process of reading; and "a reader with strong ideological commitments is likely to be an inadequate one" (Eagleton 79). That would be where Swift comes into play. In Swift's satire, the reader is *expected* to be obstinate, already prejudiced and prepossessed in his opinions. Such a reader has to be almost cruelly forced to perceive the satiric vision and respond to it. There are indeed worlds between these two expectations of reader types and responses.

To sum up, Swift's technique of making his satiric texts entrap readers in order to enforce a (at least potentially) self-liberating response in them brings us to the realms of reader-response criticism, notions of which will have to be applied in a way that appreciates the basic character of satire as written by its 17th/18th-century master, Jonathan Swift.

For the effect of Swiftian satire, I call Swift a leading master of reader entrapment. Swift aims at making his reading audience well aware of the fact that satire does concern and include them. David M. Vieth offers a very telling characterization of a work of entrapment:

> A work of entrapment is [...] kinetic rather than static [...], induces process more than it creates a product, and generates awareness rather than knowledge. It is itself an

> event, a 'happening'; it is significant for what it does, not for what it means. Through its incompleteness or internal contradictions, it tempts the reader to participate in the process of creation by supplying some kind of completeness or harmonizing of opposites out of his own imagination. (1982, 230)

Swift has great skill in the dialectical manoeuvring of notions. This is a very obvious feature of his first major satire, *A Tale of a Tub*, but also very notable in his best-known work, *Gulliver's Travels*. On a very basic level, Swift's underlying plan, be it in the *Tale* or the *Travels*, is to entrap his readers satirically in choices between opposed extremes with no distinct middle value or, at best, an unsatisfactory or insufficient one: fool or knave, Houyhnhnm or Yahoo. But this is only the most basic of Swift's moves. In Swiftian reader entrapment, the reader is forced into participation and into an attempt at the harmonizing process described above; and it thus becomes clear that it is an absolute necessity to tackle the work of Swift with sufficient awareness of the various pitfalls awaiting the reader. Swift himself will not provide any help. In fact, he disappears. This is why he pursues a strategy of changing his satiric *personae*'s standpoint so continually and thoroughly that it becomes almost impossible to define. One of the few constant factors remains the obstinate reader Swift wants to entrap (McCrea 1982, 236).

Among others, such kinetic traits in his satiric works of entrapment make it so difficult for the reader to find any area of certainty in Swift. Shifting of stances as well as entrapment between false, because satirically hyperbolic and extreme, opposites run like a red thread through Swift's satiric writings. Such use indeed prompts the conclusion that the mental process his reader has to undergo is more important to Swift than subject matter, the satiric building of awareness much more central to Swift than the mere teaching of his readers. Moreover, it must be added that there are moments in Swift when the response Swift intends to create does not even seem to be awareness but mere shock and disgust, and many readers would agree that these characteristic moments rank among the most intensive in Swift. Thus, Swift's use of satire is extremely complex and fluctuating. It resists any description which is not based on a reading focusing on process in action. In addition, it is necessary for readers of Swift to allow for characteristic Swiftian deviations from any strategy at all, a typical leaving behind of any satiric didacticism in pursuit of the creation of appalling, shocking visions. Yet, also here Swift has the reader's response in mind.

In his review of the reader's responses as studied in reception theory, Eagleton offers a graphic description of the critical process of reading which also comes very near to the experience of entrapment in indeterminacy and paradox:

> The text itself is really no more than a series of "cues" to the reader, invitations to construct […] meaning. […] The work is full of "indeterminacies," elements which depend for their effect upon the reader's interpretation, and which

> can be interpreted in a number of different, perhaps mutually conflicting ways. The paradox of this is that the more information the work provides, the more indeterminate it becomes. (76/77)

However agonizing entrapment and its vexatious effect may be for the reader, some critics have drawn attention to its potential therapeutic or "healing" effect. To any such arguments, in my view, it must be added that if such healing effects are at all intended in Swift, they are highly problematic. As Richard H. Rodino states in his study on "Vexatious Experience in Swift":

> Readers are left to redeem themselves, if they can, by thinking […] about these matters, by creating for themselves some genuine moral order out of a universal situation fraught with obstacles. However, this potentially liberating effect of a vexatious experience is by no means the same as having […] [the work] teach us something. A reader must teach himself, or he may damn himself. (1982, 342)

As has been mentioned above, Swift's stances and strategies are fluid, and Rodino is not too pessimistic in emphasizing the possibility of Swift's readers' "damning themselves." Reader entrapment implies the options of teaching or damning oneself; and it is exactly such options that made Swift notorious and his works so difficult. Moreover, Swift at times only seems to have the "damning oneself" part in mind. Rodino does not clearly specify this notion, but with reference to Swiftian satire the term adopts implications of personal as well as religious dimensions. Entrapped readers of Swift find themselves in situations of severe criticism directed at diverse personal weaknesses and faults as well as wider categories of human failure and sin which necessarily include themselves. In this sense, Swift's strategy condemns his readers to suffer, at least temporarily, in satiric hell. Furthermore, it is at times hardly recognizable in Swift whether the author left open the possibility of a potential satiric healing effect at all. "The author will not signal his own attitudes; he refuses to teach us; and the delight is his alone, most of it at our expense" (Rodino 1982, 343).

To sum up vexatious experience in Swift, it is typical of Swift sometimes to create traps for vexation's sake only, so to speak, with apparently no specific aim at moral improvement in mind, but rather the creation of a mere humbling experience for the reader. "Though brilliantly constructed, these works do not set out to be applauded, but resented and perhaps feared" (Rodino 1982, 347).

My reader-response approach to Swift deals with close analysis of satiric strategies Swift pursues in his two great satires, *A Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels*. Main emphasis lies on reader entrapment, at once the effect and motive of Swift's satires. I shall start my study with *A Tale of a Tub* for two reasons: on the one hand, chronology: the *Tale*, written between 1696 and 1697, is Swift's first major satire and shows Swift the satirist as a young man (he

was then about twenty-eight years old). On the other hand, the *Tale* introduces a veritable prototype of a Swiftian trap, Swift's "archetrap," as it were, and thus provides a model that will be used in my study as a basis and instrument for analysis of Swiftian satire.

A
T A L E
O F A
T U B.

SECTION 1

THE MODEL TRAP: SWIFT'S *TALE* AND ITS TUB

Introduction: The *Tale*, Its Background, and Its Readers

> When men write whole volumes of such stuffe, are they not Mad, or intend to make others so?[13]

In Jonathan Swift's first major satiric work, *A Tale of a Tub*, a notoriously difficult text, the reader meets with the most telling exemplar of Swift's strategic concept of reader entrapment. Satire here is mainly directed against Modern scientific experimenting and divisions in Christianity, written on the basis of Swift's firmly Anglican convictions and in imitation of scientific and theological extremism. Yet, the *Tale*, written between 1696 and 1697 and first in print in 1704, has gained rather questionable fame and notoriety since its publication and has been given such terms as "fountainhead of the entire Swiftian apocalypse" (Brown 179). Although Swift made sure that the *Tale* was published anonymously, its authorship was quickly guessed. Reader entrapment has doubtless always been very successful with the *Tale*; and Swift himself later even felt the need to apologize, again anonymously, for the perplexity his work caused.

A short history of reception of the *Tale* reads as follows: the book was Swift's first best-seller and went into three printings in its first year. The *Tale* was a literary sensation and gave its author notoriety. It tellingly revealed to Swift "the way print could transform the cultural landscape" (Kelly 2002, 3). For months after its appearance, people talked about it, whether they enjoyed or detested it. Nonetheless, in spite of the *Tale*'s instant popularity, many readers found failure with it. To many who could or would not appreciate its satiric and ironic intention to parody fanaticism, the *Tale* seemed to support exactly the aberrations it seeks to expose. Generally, a great many readers have been confused by the parasitical strategy of parody Swift employs, and to varying degrees have had a tendency to mistake Swift's *persona* or other satiric characters for himself. This is at times also true for Swift's best-known satire, *Gulliver's Travels*. Moreover, the frequently scatological imagery Swift employs in the *Tale* has often met with much censure.

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[13] Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civill*. (1651) 2 vols. Ed. G.A.J. Rogers and Karl Schuhmann. Bristol: Thoemmes, 2003, I; VIII, 63.

Swift himself was well aware of the enormously destructive potential of his *Tale*; his seemingly disrespectful light-heartedness about matters of faith was bound to be extremely shocking to many of his contemporaries. Moreover, his *Tale* was also politically volatile, for after the English Civil War, religion and politics were even more precariously interdependent. Powerful representatives of the Anglican Church were placed in a dominant House of Lords, exerting great influence and power and firmly determined to keep them. The Anglican establishment in Ireland and Britain always greatly feared a Jacobite plot from France to regain power. Fears of a "Popish Plot" had been intensified since 1678 by allegations, which later turned out to be false, made by Titus Oates, the anti-Catholic activist, who swore in court that he knew of a Jesuit plot to murder Charles II and establish a Catholic government under James, Duke of York (later James II).[14] Opponents of the Duke of York had taken their chance and greatly overstated the danger, and numerous Catholics were put under arrest and tried (Morrill 2000, 204). Moreover, even after the "Glorious Revolution," James II's Catholic son was still hosted and supported by the French king and England had been at war with France again since 1702. The fear was that if France were to win, it would mean the end of Anglican dominance, leading to confinement or even execution of those currently in power.

In this highly critical context, Swift's religious allegory and his included parody of extremist voices of Protestant Dissent and Catholicism ran the great risk of being misunderstood, which it in fact frequently was. Even if modern readers usually do not to the same extent appreciate the critical connotations Swift's hazardous tale used to have for politically engaged readers in Swift's time, it becomes clear now that Swift indeed had good reasons to hide his authorship. As a matter of fact, Swift did not dare write about the *Tale* openly in his correspondence, not even when the addressee was his closest friend, Esther Johnson ("Stella"). On such occasions Swift terms the *Tale* the "you know what," as he does in the following description of his intentions and hopes concerning the satire: "They may talk of the *you know what*; but, gad, if it had not been for that, I should never have been able to get the access I have had; and if that helps me to succeed, then that same thing will be serviceable to the Church" (Letter to Stella, Sept. 30, 1710).[15] Thus,

[14] Thus, the Popish Plot was in fact hardly more than a mere lie and a lot of hot air. However, it led to the so-called "Exclusion Crisis" of 1678-1681, when at the height of the commotion in 1679 exclusionists organized nationwide pleas in an attempt to have Catholic James, Duke of York, excluded from succession to the English throne in facour of Charles II's illegitimate son, James, Duke of Monmouth. Opponents of exclusionists were called "abhorrers," but each party gave the other a more lasting name. The abhorrers were called "Tories" (a name referring to Irish bandits) and exclusionists were called "Whigs" (after the Scottish Presbyterian rebels of the Civil War). Hence, the exclusion crisis led to the emergence in Swift's time of a long-lasting two-party system. When the Whigs openly spoke in favour of Monmouth's succession in 1681, Charles dissolved Parliament and ruled without it until his death. In spite of this defeat, Whigs later joined forces with Tories to depose James II, which did not in the least change the fact that party rivalry was intense well into the early 18th century (Trevelyan 1958, 395).

[15] Journal to Stella. Ed. Herbert Williams. 2 vols. (I; 5, 7). Subsequent quotations of the Journal to Stella are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text, with the abbreviation Stella, volume, letter and paragraph number.

Swift expresses his personal purpose behind his *Tale*: to be serviceable to the Anglican Church and to be successful, to acquire literary fame. Most critics would agree that he failed in the first (and also in his linked ambitions to get promoted in the Church) but greatly succeeded in the latter.

Apart from referring to religious and political issues current in his time, Swift's scandalous *Tale* is similar to its companion works, *The Battle of the Books* and *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, in making reference to the relatively late English outbreak of the Ancients and Moderns controversy that occurred in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. One fundamental aspect of the *Tale*'s cultural point of reference is thus to be found in this controversial debate, which may be seen as the expression of an age in the process of moving away from admiration of Ancient wisdom, Christian humanism, and tradition or conservatism to scientific rationality, religious speculation and liberal individualism. History had seen the growing emancipation of science and philosophy from classical learning and new approaches had been and were being tested in the realm of natural philosophy, covering everything today known as science. In his *New Organon (*1620), Francis Bacon had averred that,

> [R]elying on the evidence and truth of things, I reject all forms of fiction and imposture; nor do I think that it matters any more to the business in hand, whether the discoveries that shall now be made were long ago known to the ancients, and have their settings and their rising according to the vicissitude of things and course of ages, that it matters to mankind whether the new world be that island of Atlantis with which the ancients were acquainted, or now discovered for the first time. For new discoveries must be sought from the light of nature, not fetched back out of the darkness of antiquity. (I; 122; 109)

Thus, similar to his treatment of the Pillars of Hercules mentioned before, Bacon uses the Ancient notion and image of Atlantis and changes it into an expression for the New World, thus Modern exploration and discovery, leaving Antiquity behind.[16] René Descartes tellingly expresses the mood of the age of Restoration in *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649), where he makes an argument in favour of Modern physical experimentation, the study of nature, and against high regard of traditional understanding handed down by the Ancients:

[16] Bacon returns to this picture in *New Atlantis*, which he began towards the end of his life. There, Bacon got so far as to present the picture of the island Bensalem, westward of Atlantis (America), as a place where a scientific and philosophic "college" or society was established. This was clearly a prevision of the Royal Society, as Sprat's *History of the Royal Society* notes. Bacon's *New Atlantis* was published posthumously in 1627 (Case xvii). Bacon made his islanders exemplary citizens and Christians, well aware of the prominent fear, also felt in Swift, that science would make people irreligious, godless and ungovernable (Carey 1998, 63). In spite of the fact that science on Bensalem anticipates modern science, there is still a lot of semi-magical belief, still popular in Bacon's era (ibd.)

> Il n'y a rien en quoi paraisse mieux combien les sciences que nous avons des anciens sont défectueuses qu'en ce qu'ils ont écrit des passions. Car bien que ce soit une matière dont la connaissance a toujours été fort recherchée, et qu'elle ne semble pas être des plus difficiles, à cause que chacun les sentant en soi-même on a besoin d'emprunter d'ailleurs aucune observation pour en découvrir la nature: toutefois ce que les anciens en ont enseigné est si peu de chose, et pour la plupart si peu croyable, que je ne puis avoir aucune espérance d'approcher de la vérité qu'en m'éloignant des chemins qu'ils ont suivis. C'est pourquoi je serai obligé d'écrire ici en même façon que si je traitais d'une matière que jamais personne avant moi n'eût touchée. (Art. 1 155)

On a basic level, the Ancient-Modern controversy dealt with questions of whether human history was a record of progress or deterioration. Thus, the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns not only questioned the relative values of Antiquity and Modernity, but opened up the even more fundamental question as to whether an increase in information may be equated with progress (Aldridge 77). Issues of this sort were the subject of vigorous debate and are indeed far from having lost their charge today.[17]

The controversy between the Ancients and Moderns in England broke out fully with the publication of Sir William Temple's "An Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning" in 1690 (Levine 1991, 77). William Temple was a distinguished English diplomat who, after having helped arrange the Triple Alliance (between England, Holland and Sweden; in 1668) had retired to his estate. In addition, Temple, whose father John had already been a good friend to the Swift family, can be called one of the most important influences on Jonathan Swift.[18]

Swift had entered Temple's services as secretary at Moor Park near Farnham, Surrey, at the age of 21 in 1689, and from then on assisted Temple in preparing essays and other publications (Elias 1). At Moor Park, Swift was first given the opportunity to sharpen his literary skills in what one could call, at least at the initial stage of his employment, some sort of literary apprenticeship. As Temple's secretary, Swift was busied with tasks of editing and revising and he, of course, had access to Temple's extensive library. Life at Moor Park would to a great extent consist of reading and polite conversation (Elias 43). As his mentor and patron, Temple's views served Swift in many respects as a model, in spite of the fact that he significantly differed from Temple concerning character and temper. Swift's stay at Moor Park with its extensive library, especially of the classics, his literary assistance as lector and editor in Temple's service not only consolidated his classical tastes but

[17] Affentranger offers an overview of such epistemological problematic in *The Spectacle of the Growth of Knowledge and Swift's Satires on Science*. Parkland: Dissertation.com, 2000.

[18] The Temples were a very influential Dublin family. Swift's uncle Godwin was intimately acquainted with John Temple, Master of the Rolls in Ireland and in charge of land allotments to settlers especially from Scotland (Ehrenpreis 18).

also inspired his earliest attempts at creative writing. "Temple's literary style, political philosophy, moral outlook, and aesthetic judgment became either models or points of departure for Swift's own" (Ehrenpreis I 92). Thus, it is no exaggeration to term Swift's years at Moor Park, with A. C. Elias, "the formative period in Swift's literary career" (2). It was also at Moor Park where Swift first met the young girl who would stay his closest friend until her death, Esther Johnson whom Swift called "Stella," the daughter of one of Temple's housekeepers (Ehrenpreis I 104).

However, Swift's ambition could not be satisfied by such a position in the long term, and although he realized the ways he profited from his employment with the Temples and enjoyed his function as Stella's tutor, he also deeply hoped to be secured with a good position from Temple's influence, which, in fact, never happened. Swift first interrupted his stay with the Temples when he returned to Dublin for a year, in a vain attempt at finding a cure for the giddiness he had suffered from for the first time, the beginning of his lifelong illness, Ménière's Disease, a disturbance of the inner ear, causing vertigo, deafness, or both (Ehrenpreis I 106). As Elias notes, it is difficult to establish a clear picture of Swift's relationship with Temple:

> If anything, the evidence conveys a markedly different impression of Swift at Moor Park – a strong sense of his pragmatism (at times with a hint of mischievousness, at others with a hint of clear-eyed ambivalence towards Temple) and most of all, beneath his habitual praise of the great man, the sense of a complex character, still largely unknown, coping with a complex experience. A sense of privacy also comes across. In all his written comments on Temple, Swift gives remarkably little of himself away, except his ability to suit his words to his readers, his purposes, and the circumstances under which he writes. If Swift served as anyone's true disciple in the 1690s, I suspect, it was as his own. (127)

Swift left Moor Park in 1694 after a serious row with his employer who in the end failed to sufficiently use his influence in order to assist Swift's career plans. Early critics often exhibit a tendency to assign the main cause for such abrupt parting and quarrel to Swift's character, as is demonstrated by Wilson's judgement in *Swiftiana* (1804): "Swift's restless, suspicious temper, now began to display itself: feeling his own powers, and panting for independence, he concluded from Sir William Temple's not immediately providing for him, that he never intended it" (xix). It remains to be added that Swift had rather good reason for losing his patience with Temple, for his patron indeed did not seem to give any priority to his assistant's requests. Doubtlessly, Swift's ambitions were great; at the same time, Temple's goodwill as well as the effectiveness of his public weight was probably overestimated by Swift (Ehrenpreis I 263). After Temple's death, Swift requested promotion from King William, for he thought Temple had got a promise from the king, but his attempt failed.

Temple had a good name as a man, diplomat and writer; his *Miscellanea* (1680; 1692), collections of histories, memoirs and essays were very popular and his engaging prose style kept meeting the tastes of wide audiences until long after his death. However, his peculiar gentlemanly but not very scholarly "Essay upon Ancient and Modern Learning" was a failure. It was unwisely based on the allegedly Ancient "Epistles of Phalaris", a forgery, demonstrating the fact that Temple was a refined man but exhibiting some lack in classical scholarship. His essay claimed superiority for the Ancients. Temple's views, of course, were conservative; a loyal admirer of classical learning and the Renaissance, he believed that the cultures and civilizations of Ancient Greece and Rome comprised any relevant knowledge in philosophy, science and literature. Temple maintained a gallant aversion for scientific speculation and literalism. In Temple's interpretation of the widespread *querrelle*-image of the giant and the dwarf, the Modern appears as a somewhat short-sighted and vertiginous dwarf on the Ancient giant's shoulders (Aldridge 77). Temple's treatise met with much applause at the High Table in Oxford, where Charles Boyle, 4th Early of Orrey and talented undergraduate student, was charged by scholars to prepare to publish an edition of the letters of Phalaris.[19]

Two proficient and eminent classical scholars from Cambridge, William Wotton and Richard Bentley, prepared a reply to Temple's essay: Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694) constituted the Modern's response to Temple's challenge. Wotton clearly insisted on the perfection of Modern science, even if he admitted that in the realm of the arts evaluation was subjective and consequently made any comparison impossible (Levine 1991, 96). In the second edition of his *Reflections* (1697), Wotton included an appendix by Richard Bentley, another noted Modern scholar, who tried to prove through linguistic argumentation that the works of the authors Aesop and Phalaris, both Ancients whom Temple much admired, were fakes and in fact compositions of Modern authors. Bentley was ultimately right in the case of the latter (Aldridge 81).[20]

However, Swift took it upon himself to defend his patron. His satire *The Battle of the Books* ridiculed in mock-epic style Modern claims to supremacy

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[19] Ironically, Robert Boyle, a famous experimental physicist and chemist and Charles Boyle's uncle, was to be satirized by Swift in "Meditation Upon a Broomstick" in 1711.
However, Charles Boyle hence deserved Swift's praise in *A Battle of the Books*: "[Y]oung *Boyle*," "the young hero" "who then accompanied *Temple*," was commanded to "take immediate Revenge": "*Boyle*, clad in a suit of Armor which had *been given him by all the Gods*, immediately advanced against the trembling Foe, who now fled before him." (*A Tale of a Tub*. *To Which is Added The Battle of the Books and the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. Ed. A. C. Guthkelch and N. D. Smith. Oxford: Clarendon, 1958, p. 395. Subsequent quotations will be cited parenthetically in the text.)
Swift again would have found less pleasure with Charles's son, John Boyle, who wrote the first major biography on Swift, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (1751), on the basis of much unsupported information. John Boyle severely criticized both man and work; and his book's hostile attitude had a strong impact on especially earlier Swift criticism.
Thus, Swift's experiences with the Boyles, a distinguished family in Ireland, were manifold.

[20] Ehrenpreis notes that Bentley somehow deserved Swiftian attacks, his *hubris* being "admittedly colossal": Bentley "was the greatest classical scholar in England before the nineteenth century; but his erudition hardly excuses his offensive condescension" (207).

and gave the allegorical bee (representing Ancient learning) a clearly superior position over the miserable spider (standing for Modern pretence and ambition) (Levine 1991, 108). In the third edition of his *Reflections* (1705), Wotton added as an appendix his antagonistic *Observations upon The Tale of a Tub*. Swift's retort appeared in the fifth edition of *A Tale of a Tub* (1710), which makes such attacks an inherent part of the *Tale*: the Apology and the footnotes show Wotton and Bentley in the light of cheap Grub Street hirelings and "*Pedants* [with] *a perpetual Itch towards* [the *Tale*] *themselves*" (*Tale* 19). Swift's madly deceived Modern author ironically praises "the great *Helps* and *Liftings*" gained out of his fellow hack's *Reflections*, an "incomparable Piece" full of "sublime Discoveries," which appeared while he was "penning" his tale (*Tale* 129).

Swift's style, as usual, abounds with verve and nervous energy. Yet, as Samuel Johnson rightly observed, "Wit can stand its Ground against Truth only a little while" (355/356). Johnson criticized Swift's decision to be a champion of Temple's cause and even stated that such a choice must have been made because Swift "did not understand the two controversies, or he willingly misrepresented them" (355). What is left to me to add to Johnson's remark is that first I tend to embrace his second option of intentional misrepresentation (this being at the very core of satire), and second, that in spite of the fact that from an academic point of view, Swift's defence of Temple's essay *was* misguided (Temple *was* wrong about the authenticity of the letters of Phalaris), the English Ancient-Modern debate would not have been remembered this well if Swift had not been involved.

In this context, although Swift's eloquent defence could indeed not stand its ground against "truth," it at least brought its author literary fame. Thus, I am no longer sure about the prevalence of truth over wit when it comes to Swift. However, Johnson rightly addresses a critical question here: is satire's deliberate misrepresentation justifiable? Is there any good reason for the satiric weapon to be used in controversy? Can any good come of such a strategy? Or even: is there any good or worthy cause behind such strategy at all? Such questions are at the very core of my approach to reader entrapment in Swift. In addition, they refer to a deep paradox in Swift: how can Swift, who accuses his opponents of wilful misinterpretation and misrepresentation, so openly commit the very same crime?

Swift, as a champion in the *querrelle* of the Ancients' side expresses in *A Tale of a Tub* his strong reservations about the ambitious aspirations of his contemporaries. Nonetheless, it becomes more than clear after only a few pages that the *Tale* is far from being a simple one-dimensional defense of conservative and common, Ancient or Anglican, forms. To be sure: Swift was an admirer of the Ancients as well as a devout Anglican, and he greatly feared misapplication of scientific as well as religious arguing. He loathed the Moderns' experimenting spirit as he feared the threat of religious factions. Notwithstanding, if the *Tale* were plain, one-sided and programmatic satire on various contemporary phenomena, it would be a rather easy task to read it, but since its publication, the Hack's audience has generally found the

opposite true.[21] Elias is correct in his claim that practically "everyone who reads the *Tale* or the *Battle* will notice the inconvenient way in which Swift's satire of the Moderns can spill over onto the defenders of the Ancients" (155). Such paradoxical traits in Swift's polemical prose will be the scope of scrutiny in my study. John Traugott poses the question as to why a satire that ostensibly deals with the quarrels of Ancients and Moderns, Catholics, Anglicans and Dissent is as compelling today as it ever was, in spite of the fact that such controversies have almost faded from memory (1983, 89). However, as Alvin B. Kernan emphasizes, all satire has a common denominator, for "we may continue to read the great satires not for what they tell us about the Rome of the Caesars or the England of Walpole and Castlereagh, but for what they tell us about our most fundamental fears as men; about what kind of world is ultimately unliveable for true human beings" (216).

There is no doubt that much that we fear is to be found in Swiftian satire. And there is, equally, no doubt that Swift's satiric strategies to variously entrap his readers in such fears offer a very worthwhile area of study. Ehrenpreis offers an insightful description of such satiric strategy, reader involvement and entrapment, noting that in

> works by Swift we may of course meet doctrines conveyed by allusions operating within a historical context. Yet the spirit of the book as a whole hardly blows this way. Rather the direction is toward a challenging of both reader and author by the situations presented. The most profound and essential ingredients of the fantasy detach themselves from time and place, and point at various definitions of our nature which men of various cultures have accepted. In this fundamental realm the book becomes a machine designed not to advance a set of doctrines but to start readers on the way to reflection, self-doubt, and fresh thought. (III 454)

Swift's *Tale* is unquestionably swarming with criticisms of contemporary affairs. Yet, it is not my principal aim to give a detailed account of these, nor is it my main interest separately to establish their direct causal relationship to the *Tale*. This is not at all to claim that the *Tale* may be snatched from its contemporary context, but I agree with Traugott's view that history "is necessary as a dictionary may be to understand a word though it can [by itself] shed no light on the syntax" (1992, 153). On the one hand, the *Tale* seems to offer an invitation to explain it on the grounds of historical commentary. On the other hand, such procedure is highly problematic, as the *Tale* itself demonstrates in presenting the reader with the commentators who have fallen victim to such lure. Moreover, the reader would be totally excluded from the process if the *Tale* were to be explained by way of historical footnotes, as Traugott states,

[21] In the following, I will adopt the use of the Hack as a label for the broad variety of attitudes and styles that Swift associates with his *persona* and thus with the equally elusive term Modernity.

> Do we not require, so as to understand what Swift *means* by this crazy stuff, the commentary of a card-carrying historicist? Don't leave home without him. But this proposition is just what I wish to examine. It has several fatal flaws, the most disabling of which is that it fairly puts the reader out of business. If what Swift believed is discoverable by this historical method, what has the reader to do with the author's irony, which, like all tropes but far more insistently, seems obviously a transaction between author and reader, and, moreover, one effective at the instant of reading in ways intellectually and rhetorically complicated? Is irony to be inverted to receive the straight message, and why would anyone who wants to be understood resort to such roundabout ways? How can historicism, which seeks to abolish the present to recapture the past, translate it? These questions, opening to a consideration of the trope of irony, and especially of Swift's peculiar sort in the *Tale*, are central to study the *Tale*." (1992, 152/153)

In this sense, the reading I would like to offer in the present study does not primarily focus on the historical or epistemological contemporary *causes célèbres* alluded to and satirically criticized in the *Tale*, but rather situates such issues and events as significant controversial material on the surface of its Tub, which will be shown to be a model of Swiftian satiric structure, Traugott's "syntax", and an image of reader entrapment in Swift. [22] Traugott's question why Swift would "resort to such roundabout ways" will be at the very core of my approach.

In order to provide an excuse for the bewilderment the *Tale* caused as well as the wild exuberance of images it exhibits, Swift explained that such traits may be attributed to the youth of its author who at the time of the work's composition was

> *a young Gentleman much in the World, and wrote to the Tast of those who were like himself; therefore in order to allure them, he gave a Liberty to his Pen, which might not suit with maturer Years, or graver Characters* [...]. (*Tale* 4)

Needless to say that youth indeed is at best just one factor to explain the *Tale*'s copiousness, and obviously yields a not very satisfactory justification of its nature. What is it in fact that makes Swift's satire so difficult? Such Swiftian classifications as the description of the *Tale* as "*the most innocent Book in the World*" are merely exemplary of the stated fact that "*there generally runs an Irony through the Thread of the whole Book*" (*Tale* 8). The pervasive irony becomes obvious as soon as the reader proceeds through the text, and it is

[22] In the following, the Tub will refer to features of satiric structure in Swift linked with the concept of reader entrapment and associated with the image of the key metaphor in Swift's *Tale*.

one of the points often agreed on in Swift criticism that this particularly Swiftian "*Thread*" of "*Irony*" makes interpretation difficult. That the *Tale* was often received with confusion, total rejection, or even hatred may be explained by looking at the context of the complexities of Swift's satiric-ironic mode. An interpretation of the *Tale*'s basic satiric context is indeed far from being unproblematic, for it is frequently very difficult for the reader to unequivocally discern, in the endeavour to "decode" Swift's irony, what position or front line a specific satiric attack is thrust into, where it stops, and what reliable authority the attack may be based on.

These confusing features of Swiftian satire have never remained without its effect on the readers. Whether it is a trait common to all satire or more specific to Swift, Swift's work has always irritated powerful people, including, in his own words, some of "*the* weightiest *Men in the* weightiest *Stations*" (*Tale* 6). In Part I of *Gulliver's Trav*els, "A Voyage to Lilliput," Swift offers in a pivotal passage a neat description of the nature of his satirical writing; he provides the reader with a telling image of how his satire works, and at what cost satiric healing is achieved. To save the royal palace, Gulliver acts as a fireman and thus in some way adopts the role of Swift-the-satirist, his master:

> [T]his magnificent Palace would have infallibly been burnt down to the Ground, if by Presence of Mind, unusual to me, I had not suddenly thought of an Expedient. I had the Evening before drank plentifully of a most delicious Wine [...] which is very diuretick. [...] The Heat I had contracted by coming very near the Flames, and by my labouring to quench them, made the Wine begin to operate by Urine; which I voided in such a Quantity, and applied so well to the proper Places, that in three Minutes the Fire was wholly extinguished [...] I was privately assured, that the Empress conceiving the greatest Abhorrence of what I had done [...] in the Presence of her chief Confidents, could not forbear vowing Revenge. (*GT* 69/70)

Swift obviously flatters himself here in ironically staging his abilities as satirist and in proving his skills of applying and directing "such a Quantity" of satiric bite "to the proper places." The quality of such satiric wit is not left in doubt either, and will be an important object of attention in this study. The passage makes it quite clear that the prize the satirist has to pay for such rescue or healing is resentment by the healed. As has been commonly noted, the Lilliputian empress may very likely represent Queen Anne, who is said to have strongly disliked Swift's *Tale* because of its alleged disrespect of religious issues. Tradition has it that the Queen perceived the *Tale*'s design as obscenity if not blasphemy and that, for the same reason, the *Tale* constituted the decisive and insurmountable obstacle to Swift's advancement, the reason why he was never promoted in the Church. Samuel Johnson, who calls Swift's *Tale* a "wild work" (355) which "exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as [Swift] afterwards never possessed, or never exerted" (367), claims in his *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*

that "Archbishop Sharp and the Duchess of Somerset, by showing [the *Tale*] to the queen, debarred him from a bishopric" (355). In the final years of Queen Anne's reign (1702-1714), the English government was led by the Tories (Robert Harley and Henry St John). Despite her preferment of the Tories, Anne was not fond of Swift, a Tory himself, and refused him promotion in the church to which he considered himself entitled. There was much speculation about Anne's advisors (especially the Duchess of Somerset) speaking against Swift because of his *Tale of a Tub* and other reasons for enmity, such as his attacks in *The Windsor Prophecy*.[23]

Hence, Swift's role as political pamphleteer and satirist, and the resulting resentment he had to face, seriously influenced the way he was looked upon in public, apparently to such an extent as to cause some damage to his reputation, social position and career. In the same vein, there has often been a tendency, especially among early critics, to endeavour to closely link Swift's personality with his works, as is done in Johnson's *Lives*. Johnson describes Swift as "not a man to be either loved or envied [...] [who] seems to have wasted life in discontent, by the rage of neglected pride" (370) "with a countenance sour and severe, which seldom softened by any appearance of gaiety", generally being a person of "not many recommendations" and of a "tyrannic peevishness" (368). Such descriptions helped establish the tradition of depicting Swift as a gloomy and frustrated genius, of immediately connecting such traits with his literary work and vice versa. How directly some among Swift's critics were ready to complete this step is shown by Johnson's following statement:

> The greatest difficulty that occurs, in analysing his character, is to discover by what depravity of intellect he took delight in revolving ideas, from which almost every other mind shrieks with disgust. The ideas of pleasure, even when criminal, may solicit the imagination; but what has disease, deformity, and filth, upon which the thoughts can be allured to dwell? (370)

Lord Orrery (56) had already argued that not only Swift's but also the reader's mind is in danger of becoming "debased" when dealing with such matters: "Swift has indulged in a misanthropy that is intolerable. The representation which he has given us of human nature, must terrify, and even debase the mind of the reader who views it." During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, literary works were often read and judged within a firm biographical framework. Hence, Swift's satiric visions were often taken as expressions of such "depravity of intellect." In this sense, it follows, the ways Swift's satiric writings were received shaped the light in which his personality was judged. Satire being a genre that angrily focuses on human error and depravity may easily lead to the picture of Swift as a peevish, mistaken and

[23] Swift wrote his satire because he wanted to take revenge for the fact that the Duke and Duchess of Somerset, who had formerly supported Harley, then turned to intriguing against him. He aimed at having the Duchess dismissed by the Queen.

depraved author.[24] And, returning to the statement above, it cannot but be concluded that what Johnson in fact objects to is not only Swift, but also satire itself. As expected, more recent scholars have often found strongly author-centred approaches one-sided, inadequate and somewhat naïve, although it is to be noted, with Tippett, "how deeply engrained in our literary tradition is the habit of reading a work of literature as the expression of its author's *personal*ity" (19). Thus, the acknowledgment that a literary work still bears the characteristic imprint of its author still continues, but current criticism seeks to "avoid both the heavy-handedness of earlier moralistic and post-war psychoanalytic commentators" and the attempt at absolute separation of author and text (Tippett 26). In "Avoiding Swift," Allen Reddick points out how critical traditions around Swift sprang up and how Swift's final disease, suffering and death were exploited by his opponents as moral example and just punishment for misanthropy. Reddick points out that the "insistence and consistency" of "moralizing on Swift's protracted illness and death" became a prominent feature of Swift criticism, and he argues that such author-centred readings, though "substituted" for more thorough "discussion of his work," are not entirely beside the point, demonstrating the ways Swift the man and his work were perceived of (1998, 152).

To return to *A Tale of a Tub*: Swift's first major satire was received as a veritable scandal and made its author notorious, as is shown by William Wotton's hostile *Observations upon The Tale of a Tub* (1705), the first published interpretation of the *Tale*, and alleged "key" to its difficulties. Wotton damns the *Tale* as an irreverent and crude "Banter upon all that is esteemed as Sacred among all Sects and Religions among Men":

> I thought it might be useful to many People who pretend they see no harm in it, to lay open the Mischief of the Ludicrous Allegory, and to shew what that drives at which has been so greedily brought up and read. In one Word, God and Religion, Truth and Moral Honesty, Learning and Industry are made a May-Game, and the most serious Things in the World are described as so many Scenes in a Tale of a Tub. (quoted by Guthkelch/Smith 317)

Wotton interprets Swift's satire as a straightforward and precise allegory of the history of Christianity. He isolates and thereby reduces allegorical elements in the *Tale*, explaining them in specific doctrinal and historical terms, and thus becomes Swift's eminent first victim. That Swift indeed enjoyed this "catch" is shown by his somewhat malicious use of Wotton's remarks as footnotes in the fifth edition of 1710. In Jean-Paul Forster's words, these Swiftian footnotes "jubilantly" announce "that one well-known 'modern' commentator and pedant had swallowed the bait and been caught hook, line, and sinker" (1992, 32).

[24] In the third chapter of this study, I will discuss the ways such commentaries influenced the image of Swift the author and man in public.

We may laugh at Queen Anne, Archbishop Sharp, or William Wotton as Swift's renowned contemporary victims. However, do readers indeed react very differently to Swift's satiric entrapment these days? Although we are forewarned, it appears doubtful that modern readers are much more resistant than Swift's contemporaries were to the various pitfalls awaiting them in Swift. Swift's satire in fact sneers at all eager critical attempts to put the *Tale* into firm moral or epistemological frameworks. As Jay Arnold Levine puts it, by considering the religious allegory of the three brothers and their coats as the centre of Swift's *Tale*, many "readers have been diverted by the Tub of the Tale" (211). An atmosphere of uneasiness suffuses the work, a deep-rooted feeling that the reader too is in some way directly attacked by Swift's irony, and be it only by the temptation to achieve a satisfactory interpretation, to nail Swift down to a firm position or to draw an uncompromising, stable authorial line out of the *Tale*'s internal contradictions. By disallowing his readers the comforts of insider status and thus trapping them into forced decision-making, Swift appears precisely to "*seek* their resentment" (Mueller 105). As has been shown, this resentment has gone so far that to some critics there appears to be an evil or mad Swift behind the *Tale*. In Traugott's words, "[i]n a strange way, Swift's worst instincts led him to his most creative work" (1983, 100). However, to me, a direct reverse of this statement seems more appropriate: it is Swift's most creative instincts that lead him to the *Tale*'s worst moments, which are bad in the sense that they consolidate the overwhelming negativity of the *Tale*'s satiric world.

A close study of the text will reveal its satiric vision and linked strategy of reader entrapment. Minding Kenneth Craven's warning that "relative truth" (15) is as much as may be hoped for (especially when it comes to Swiftian satire), I will attempt a reading of Swift's satiric writings that is inspired by the very "copiousness of images" (Johnson 367) and related literary techniques that Swift's work exhibits.

Image and Model of Satiric Entrapment in Swift: the Tub

> *A Tale of a Tub,* Sir, a meere tale of a Tub.
> Lend it no eare I pray you.[25]

In the preface to his *Tale of a Tub*, Swift provides an ironic description of the satiric trap mechanism awaiting his readers. As Swift's hack author tells us, his *Tale* is only of a temporary design. It is a kind of provisional toy or bait, written in order to distract "for an *Interim* of some Months" the Modern wits of his age from "pick[ing] Holes in the weak sides of Religion and Government" (*Tale* 39) until "a large Academy" (*Tale* 41) will be ready to comprise them.[26] As suggested by the tub metaphor, the *Tale* is designed to protect the commonwealth, the ship of state and the church, from the reforming design of Moderns. It is laid open and made absolutely transparent who Swift intends to attack here. The satiric targets are directly and openly presented, in spite of their somewhat vague definition as Moderns, as eager innovators and projectors in the realms of religion and politics.

Yet, focus on reader involvement in Swift prompts us to take a closer look at the trap the Hack has designed as well as the explanations he offers here to justify its creation. The Hack's description of the *Tale*'s original purpose in the "Preface" is the first instance of programmatic Tubbian imagery that runs through the entire work: the *Tale* thus constitutes a tub, albeit designed by a hack, itself thrown out to deflect the horrible *Leviathan* wits from overturning the commonwealth. This is the point in the text where the reader first and most tellingly encounters his tub-as-a-trap:

> To this End, at a Grand Committee, some Days ago, this important Discovery was made by a certain curious and refined Observer; That Sea-men have a Custom when they meet a *Whale*, to fling him out an empty *Tub*, by way of Amusement, to divert him from laying violent Hands upon the Ship. This Parable was immediately mythologiz'd: The *Whale* was interpreted to be *Hobs's Leviathan*, which tosses and plays with all other Schemes of Religion and Government, whereof a great many are hollow, and dry, and empty, and noisy, and wooden, and given to Rotation. This is the *Leviathan* from whence the terrible Wits of our Age are said to borrow their Weapons. The *Ship*

[25] Jonson, Ben. *A Tale of a Tub*. (1633) *Ben Jonson's Entire Works*. 11 vols. Vol. 3. Ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927, I; IV; 25-26.

[26] Ironically, long after the *Tale*'s first publication, Joseph Addison made a very similar statement in *The Spectator* No. 262 on the formation of the Royal Society. He describes the new-launched society, using the tub/whale imagery, as very helpful in turning "many of the greatest Genius's of that Age to the Disquisitions of natural Knowledge, who, if they had engaged in Politicks with the same Parts and Application, might have set their Country in a Flame" (quoted by Guthkelch/Smith 39).

> in danger, is easily understood to be its old Antitype the *Commonwealth*. But, how to analyze the *Tub*, was a Matter of difficulty; when after long Enquiry and Debate, the literal Meaning was preserved: And it was decreed, that in order to prevent these *Leviathans* from tossing and sporting with the *Commonwealth*, (which of itself is too apt to *fluctuate*) they should be diverted from that Game by a *Tale of a Tub*. And my Genius being conceived to lye not unhappily that way, I had the Honor done me to be engaged in the Performance. (*Tale* 40/41)

First of all, this programmatic use of the tub metaphor provides effective information about Swift's Tubbian text. The Hack's decoy is "hollow, and dry, and empty, and noisy, and wooden;" it diverts the whales "by way of Amusement;" and it is moved and "given to Rotation." Barrenness, pandemonium, materialism, circularity and rotation are the most graphic features of Swift's trap. As Frank Palmieri (1985, 154) points out, the "adjectives describing tubs *do* characterise the *Tale* both accurately and ironically." What is more, as will be shown, they describe and provide a model for reader entrapment in Swift with the same accuracy and irony.

Is the Hack's *Tale* indeed empty? Why is it so difficult to attack the *Tale* or Swift's traps in general? What is the link between barrenness, materialism, extremism, and circularity in Swiftian reader entrapment? Such are some of the questions the present study aims at providing answers, or rather ideas, for, although I am well aware of the fact that such objectives are already prerequisites for ranking among Swift's satiric butts. In his typological and figurative description of the underlying intent of his work, the Hack admits having preserved the "literal meaning" of the Tub. This not only constitutes, as Nigel Wood (1986, 48) argues, a failure or initial collapse of the Hack's "systems of analysis to convert all the terms of his metaphor into significant meaning,"[27] but also ironically exposes the material omnipresence or reality of the *Tale* as a Tub and physical trap. The Tub is to be taken literally, as an ordinary tub, and one which provides the structure of the Hack's tale. The Hack's Tubbian system is ironically restricted to physical matter, and as the *Tale* will amply demonstrate, such stubborn materialism makes impossible any attempt to draw out intellectual or spiritual meaning.

Diversion and confusion of his readers are two basic strategies Swift pursues to achieve his satiric goals. As the Hack's programmatic announcement illustrates, it is Swift's authorial strategy (in employing the Hack to write the *Tale*) to allow both the Hack-*persona* and his readers to be overwhelmed with an outpouring of information. The method involves throwing out to eager Leviathan intellects a universal programme in learning, constructed by a most productive and self-important writer, in order to let the Hack divert his own Modern kind, and, in the end, also himself by luring the

[27] That the Hack allows for the Tub's literal meaning ironically comments on his skills as an author. In its usual form symbolism plays with common associations between an object (thus a physical or literal unit) and a concept (the referred mental unit). As will be shown, the Hack's Tubbian *Tale* has no difficulties with the former, but many with the latter.

Tale's readers into total absorption in the complex Tubbian information system. Thus, the *Tale* is not only a fake in the ironic and parodic sense, but as the Hack openly admits and as the Tubbian imagery suggests, it is an explicitly declared decoy and trap, an overt picture of satiric reader entrapment. This is Swift's warning: the reader had better be wary of the various Tubbian traps awaiting him. In spite of his work's confusing complexity, no one may blame the Hack for not having been abundantly clear about this fact.

The Hack's description, which is very rich or rather overly rich in imagery, would furthermore have stimulated several associations in contemporary readers, for its layers of meaning are formed out of commonplace notions and well-known visual elements. First, and very important with regard to the religious allegory of the *Tale,* the image of the Tub would evoke notions of fanatic tub-preachers, mostly associated with Calvinism, who were known to use tubs as makeshift pulpits in public places. In addition, the maritime practice of throwing tubs off the sterns of ships in order to divert threatening whales is frequently alluded to in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature. The basic imagery was thus very familiar to most of Swift's readers. Then, as a well-known phrase, "a tale of a tub" would meet the following main response in Swift's readers: the tale is "a flimflam," "idle discourse," or "a tale of a roasted horse," as Cotgrave's Dictionary gives it (quoted by Guthkelch/Smith xxviii). As an instance of such connotation, we find the following lines in the Prologue to Ben Jonson's play *A Tale of a Tub* (1633), one of his later (and not very successful) works, which makes clear reference to such usage:

> NO *State-affaires, nor any politique* Club,
> *Pretend wee in our* Tale*, here, of a* Tub*:*
> *But acts of* Clownes *and* Constables*, to day*
> *Stuffe out the* Scenes *of our ridiculous* Play. […]
> *And all the Neighbour-hood, from old Records,*
> *Of antick Proverbs, drawne from* Whitson-Lord's*.*
> *And their Authorities, at* Wakes *and* Ales*,*
> *With countrey precedents, and old Wives Tales*. (1-9)[28]

This is a very neat summary of contemporary associations with the phrase: a "tale of a tub" is an "old wife's tale," thus a sensational account, as well as a foolish report of the trifling affairs of clowns. Thus, there again is the distinct meaning of tossing with a silly, worthless and insignificant toy. Jonson's play uses proverbial tradition to make fun of the ridiculous happenings around one foolish country Squire, Tripoly Tub of Totten-Court, who wishes to have a story about himself written, his biography, thus, a tale of a Tub, and asks the local cooper, Medlay, to assist him in his project to create such a toy:

> *Tub.* I'ld have a toy presented,
> *A Tale of a Tub,* a storie of my selfe,

[28] Jonson, Ben. *A Tale of a Tub* (1633). *Ben Jonson's Entire Works*. Vol. III. Eds. Herford, C. H. and Percy Simpson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927. Subsequent quotations from Jonson's *Tale* are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.

> You can expresse a Tub. *Med.* If it conduce
> To the designe, what ere is feazeable:
> I can expresse a Wash-house (if need be),
> With a whole pedigree of Tubs. (V; II; 42-48)

Jonson also makes reference to the well-known image of Diogenes' Tub, the tub which the Greek Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope († Corinth 323 BC) is traditionally said to have carried about and used as his home:

> A kyrsin Name, that he left me, *Diogenes.*
> A mighty learned man, but pest'lence poore.
> Vor h' had no House, save an old *Tub,* to dwell in,
> (I vind that in records) and still he turn'd it
> I' the wind's teeth, as't blew on his back-side [...].
> *Med.* Thence came *A Tale of a Tub;*
> And the virst *Tale of a Tub,* old *D'ogenes Tub.* (IV; I; 28-35)

Jonson's passage gives a graphic description of Diogenes, learned man who prefers poverty and exposure to bad weather to ordinary life. Diogenes was famous for his great eloquence and pointed expression, and tradition has it that he chose the life of a beggar in order to do justice to the Cynics' notion of independence and autarchy (Hirschberger 70). Such a way of life was totally at odds with convention, which gave him the mocking nickname *kyon*, dog, a telling description of his life in modesty (Metzler 198).

Interestingly, the famous notion of Diogenes in his tub also stems from such sources as Swift's satiric Ancient predecessor Juvenal (50?-130 AD). In spite of the fact that such descriptions most probably have very little accuracy as to a historical Diogenes, the image they create of the Cynic's attitude is very revealing. In his *Satura XIV*, Juvenal describes Diogenes as a "nude Cynic," who "fears no fire for his tub," because if it is destroyed, he will find or "make himself a new house to-morrow, or keep it repaired with clamps of lead" (308-310). Juvenal very likely intends this description to demonstrate the Cynic's scorn of possession and materialism in general, for he introduces his description of Diogenes with censure of wealth: "Wealth got with such woes is preserved by fears and troubles that are greater still; it is misery to have the guardianship of a great fortune" (*Satires* XIV 303-304). Perhaps the most famous Cynic, Diogenes despised conventional values, such as social status and prosperity, which he considered to be contrary to life in accordance with nature.

Such attitudes gave rise to a tradition which has it that Diogenes once asked a friend to find a cave or cell for him to live in; when the latter did not succeed, Diogenes is said to have taken abode in a *pithos*, a large tub, as an expression of his indignation and scorn for the world. Traditionally, Diogenes practiced rigid abstinence, exposed himself to extremes of weather and lived on the simplest diet. In his self-imposed poverty, Diogenes was radical: he was said to have even thrown away his cup as an unnecessary item after having observed a boy drink from the hollow of his hand. Juvenal relates an anecdote about the reverence Alexander the Great felt for the Cynic: "When

Alexander beheld in that tub its mighty occupant, he felt how much happier was the man who had no desires than he who claimed for himself the entire world, with perils before him as great as his achievements (*Satires* XIV 311-314). Diogenes led a life outside society, condemning social obligations and norms. By way of his provoking way of life (of which the tub was only one element) and eloquent philosophical formulations, he exposed the lives of his fellow-citizens to be entirely defined by *nómos*, convention, and made the latter the target of his biting scorn (Metzler 194).

Yet, Diogenes became a well-known character among the Cynics due to the originality of his personality rather than his ideas, which were deeply embedded in the Cynic philosophical school established by Antisthenes of Athens (445-365 BC). The Cynics held that virtue was the only end of human existence; only those who gave up everything else could realize virtue and achieve wisdom. Thus, complete autarchy was an indispensable element of the Cynic's position. This view led to the typical Cynic stance of contempt of most human achievements and ambitions. Disdain of worldly goods was absolute in Cynic philosophy, and this led to the scorn for culture, science, politics, custom social convention and even decency (Hirschberger 69).

To whatever exact extent Swift had such Diogenes connotation in mind, drawing from the image of Diogenes' Tub is effective in an approach to understanding aspects of Swift's image and strategy of the satiric Tub. The picture of Diogenes the Cynic adds elements such as scornful eloquence and indignation at the world's materialism and intellectual ambition, thus essential features of the Tubbian entrapment device in Swift.

Moreover, it links the *Tale* to notions of a characteristic form of satire which has been called "Menippean," as it originally derived from the Greek Cynic Menippus (3rd century BC). Like Diogenes, Menippus had become a literary figure; both of them functioning as "literary saboteurs of philosophical pretense, poking fun at the intellectual vanities of academicians." Thus, Diogenes and Menippus frequently appear "in the works of later Menippean satirists such as Varro and Lucian, and they are frequent walk-ons in Renaissance satire as well" (Blanchard 15). W. Scott Blanchard, noting that "Erasmus, and Rabelais had added much luster to the Menippean form by the time it had reached Swift" (164), points out that "the form seems appropriate for literary criticism (or at the very least for literary and scholarly in-fighting)," which "seems true of the form throughout the Renaissance, and reaches its most anarchic and destructive potential in Swift's *Tale of a Tub*" (28). It must be allowed that "Menippean satire" constitutes a rather vague definition, which led some scholars not to apply it.[29] Yet, Blanchard's definition traces some reasons for such openness:

> In keeping with the form's penchant for paradox, […] one of its defining features is its very rejection of aesthetic norms, so the student of Menippean satire is faced with the conundrum of defining a form that is often somewhat

[29] The term was changed into "anatomy" by Northrop Frye in his study of Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), a famous Renaissance example of the Menippean form.

> formless or else defined in opposition to other literary forms. With philosophical foundations in both Cynicism and Pyrrhonism – the latter constituting the most radical form of ancient scepticism – Menippean satire challenges its readers to question the validity of conventional literary categories because it so often violates generic boundaries. As a Protean literary form, the Menippean satire mirrors a world that is "in ceaseless motion" and where "nothing is certain," as Erich Auerbach says of Petronius's *Satyricon*. But whatever outward shape or inward attitude the form projects, its author's intentions seem, in nearly every case, to demonstrate the disabling and limiting conditions under which the human intellect operates. (11/12)[30]

Even if Blanchard acknowledges that it is problematic to define a genre which understands itself as "*anti-genre*" and thus "refuses to be judged by the terms of the very conventional generic categories" (24), the description above offers some features of Menippean satire I would like to call, with regard to Swift's satires, Tubbian. It has a "penchant for paradox," it constitutes "a form that is often somewhat formless" or empty, it is "in ceaseless motion," thus envisions a reality where "nothing is certain," and, finally, it is meant to be in strategic "opposition to other literary forms," hence expressing digression or parody. Furthermore, the form's philosophical basis of scepticism moves it into interpretative areas which can prove useful when reading Swift, as I will try to show later in this study.

There is yet another notable difference between the two ancient forms of satire, (Greek) verse and prose Menippean and traditional (Roman) verse satire, as Blanchard points out: "Menippean satire refuses to allow an ideal type to emerge from its chaotic sprawl, whereas Roman satire achieves its effects by contrasting the debased world of the present to models of human behavior that are acceptable" (18/19). With regard to reader entrapment, this is indeed an important note, for most readers of Swift would agree that Swift predominantly confronts his audience with the "chaotic sprawl" of satire and refuses to present acceptable models of behaviour.

In addition and somewhat linked to notions of the (im)possibility of satiric "healing," the expression "a tale of a tub" possibly also evoked in a contemporary audience the obsolete but well-documented and much-ridiculed method of the sweating tub used in treating venereal disease. As recorded in *A Glossary of Words and Phrases Names and Allusions*,

> The discipline of sweating in a heated tub, for a considerable time […] was formerly thought necessary for the cure of the venereal taint. In some places a cave, an oven, or any other very close situation, was used for the

[30] Auerbach's comments are in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Transl. Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 28.

> same purpose; but in England the tub seems to have prevailed, and is consequently often alluded to [...] by comic or satiric writers [...]. (Nares/Halliwell/Wright 906)

To "throw out a tub for a whale" seems furthermore to have carried the meaning, "give a sop to anyone, a delicate method of bribing" (Nares et al. 906).

Such associations make the phrase and the Hack's description of his strategy of involvement and entrapment particularly apt to characterize the *Tale* and on a larger scale Swift's satiric writings in general. They identify various features of the text: the fanaticism of Dissent; the imagined repulse of a threat; the idle gossip; and the diversionary intention. The idea of the Tub as trap and at the same time cure for disease is particularly fit to depict graphically Swift's goals. Taking into account the *Tale*'s professed aim to criticize "*the numerous and gross Corruptions in Religion and Learning*" (*Tale* 4) and "*to see the Follies of Fanaticism and Superstition exposed*" (*Tale* 5), this aspect of the Tubbian image may be seen as an expression of Swift's satiric intention (or at least the topical satiric stance) to indirectly provide a remedy for sin and, especially, to let his readers sweat within his Tub. The Tub becomes an illustration and at the same time a warning of the entrapment awaiting the reader. Hence the Tub itself is nothing other than both a literal and a figurative representation of captivity, satiric reader entrapment in Swift.[31]

It is interesting to note in this context of programmatic metaphor how Swift turns to the work of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and treats his *Leviathan* (1651), which is directly mentioned and ironized as a figure in Swift's programmatic paragraph on the Tub. Hobbes' work justifies a monstrous but necessary commonwealth. This commonwealth is created by mankind to prevent in an unruled natural state equally monstrous men from attacking and destroying each other, in the sense of *homo homini lupus*. In Swift's text, however, the Leviathan becomes itself the monstrous threat to the state. In order to accomplish this move, Swift slyly manipulates Hobbes' metaphor. Through the Tub's maritime associations, Hobbes' *Leviathan* is literally turned into the vicious biblical sea-monster whose name it carries, and thus forced into the original shape and association of its key metaphor.[32] Swift further transforms "the Leviathan," which is in the Hobbesian sense the abstracted and impenetrable governmental power of a commonwealth with its giant

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[31] Another very telling image of captivity stems from Plato's *Republic* (ca. 360 BC); and it is remarkable to note parallels between Plato's simile of the cave and Tubbian entrapment in Swift. In the simile of the cave, men are compared to prisoners, bound in a cave and only allowed to look in one direction. This is very much like the situation Swiftian satire intends to create for its readers, offering only extreme satiric vision and drawing readers into captivity by its irritating hyperbole and paradox. Accordingly, in Plato's simile, there is a fire in the cave and the captives are only allowed to see the shadows of their own persons and of items around them which are projected on the wall. Liberation of such captivity is no easy task, and only a true philosopher may recover from it: when one of the captives manages to leave the cave and sees the sunlight at last, he also perceives real things, himself, and not mere shadows for the first time. This leads to the final realization of his former deception and a test of his willingness to face the truth (Plato, *Republic*. Book VII).

[32] Psalms 104, 26; Isaiah 27, 1.

proportions and terrible force, into its direct opposite: Leviathan (and *Leviathan*) is not any more the "Artificiall" *civitas* or commonwealth "intended" for the "protection and defence" of man (*Leviathan* I. 8), but itself a threat to the ship of state and church. Highly ironically, it is Swift's strategic little Tub that is aimed at further removal of Hobbes *Leviathan* from the political and philosophical stage to the province of Tubbian distractions, where, as Francus states, "it can be safely ignored" (27).[33]

Here we meet one of various instances in the *Tale* where a basic problem with figurative discourse is revealed: as the meaning of metaphors may readily be corrupted and altered, a figurative interpretation may easily turn upon itself. This is also true of Swift's Tubbian imagery and strategy. It becomes clear that there is a basic paradoxical trait underlying Swift's strategic use of the Tub as a means for satiric reader entrapment. It will be shown how Swift engages this paradoxical aspect as one more factor to entrap his readers. We are warned: any allegorizing interpretative engagement with the Hack's unwieldy figurative discourse, which I have just committed, inevitably means that one enters the trap of the Tubbian world and to a certain extent becomes, in the Wottonian manner, its victim and prisoner.

[33] As a matter of fact, Hobbes was suspected of atheism, his mechanic materialism as a source of heterodoxy and his *Leviathan* an expression of political and social infidelity, so that his works "were burnt by the public hangman, proscribed by the University of Oxford" and Hobbes became "the bogeyman of his age" (Hunter 168/169).

Entrapment through Absorption: The Tub's Abundance of Material

> I dare venture to Promise, the Judicious Reader shall find nothing neglected here, that can be of Use upon any Emergency of Life. I am confident to have included and exhausted all that Human Imagination can *Rise* or *Fall* to. (*Tale* 329/30)

One of the *Tale*'s strategic objectives is diversion and confusion of its readers. In his "Digression in the Modern Kind," the Hack explains that the "*Bulk*" of a work is "*a Circumstance by no means to be neglected by a skillful Writer*" (*Tale* 132). As Michael DePorte (1974, 67) argues, the correlation between superfluous imagination and insanity is in fact particularly meaningful for an understanding of the *Tale*'s narrator and his work itself.

From a contemporary point of view, satire of the rise of the press and consequent flooding the public with pamphlets and cheap Grub Street productions of all kinds may very well have ranked among Swift's objectives. The critical realm addressed here are the ways the press can influence and manipulate public opinion by overflowing communities with propagandistic pieces of information, which happened in Swift's time to an unprecedented extent, as Oakleaf avers:

> Swift and his contemporaries shaped and were shaped by the public sphere, the emerging social institutions and practices through which public opinion is created. These institutions include journals and periodicals, clubs and coffee houses, various combinations of political agents or booksellers with printers or even with the hawkers of anonymous broadsheets; in brief, everything associated with the dissemination and social reception of "information," especially its public debate. (2003, 43)

Swift attacks the spate of political and religious tracts produced by the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1679, which lead to an unregulated press (until revival of licensing in 1685-1692) and thus in political as well as religious matters to "chaos of unbrotherly disagreement, of individual opinion and multiplying Dissent" (Walsh 2003, 172). Due to the fact that the "old system of licensing books before publication" had been "allowed to die," "men could write boldly upon religious arguments that once would have exposed them to prosecutions" (Ehrenpreis I 251). In this same context, Swift attacks the irresponsibility of many printers and writers, who, when they publish their ideas, "ought to be answerable for the effects their thoughts produce upon others" (*PW* IV 49). Or as Walsh (2003,173) puts it, "freedom of expression stops short of the right to shout 'fire!' in a crowded theatre, and for Swift, as for so many of

his contemporaries, post-Civil-War and post-Revolution Britain was just such a theatre." Swift was very apprehensive of such "shouts," especially if multiplied by a largely unregulated press. At the same time, he knew exactly their effectiveness, for, paradoxically, he employed them in his activity as political pamphleteer and satirist. However, Swift attacks what he deems or is inclined to represent as low-level writing of the hack-hireling sort, which in his eyes constitutes a veritable poison endangering public peace.

In this critical context, the reader, proceeding through the text, increasingly experiences a feeling of shallowness or even hollowness which stands in stark contrast to the great flow of wildly imaginative information. As early as the preface the Hack betrays a tendency to long-windedness and pedantry when he expresses his intention "towards extending this Preface into the Size now in Vogue, which by Rule ought to be *large* in proportion as the subsequent Volume is *small*" (*Tale* 54). In spite of the fact that the religious allegory of the three brothers and their father's will is supposed to be the core of the Hack's proud scholarly edition, the reader has to struggle through no fewer than seven introductory parts. Nor is this sufficient: whoever expects, after the heavy bulk of the Hack's self-complimentary prelude, to get to the main story is soon utterly disappointed. As soon as the alleged main section is about to begin, "*the Allegory of the Coats, and the three Brothers*" that is "*to make up the Body of the Discourse*" (*Tale* 4), we witness the Hack's first intrusion in the form of a digression that goes back to the issue of Modern learning in the introductions. As soon becomes clear, the Hack is very inclined to make such interruptions: there are four announced digressions and one unannounced digression in his *Tale*.[34] The Hack's fondness for lengthy digressions is so extreme that, as Forster observes, "[a]t times the tale seems forgotten for good" (1992, 38/9).

In fact, the *Tale*'s framework, the Hack's diffuse introduction and digressions, increasingly usurps what is supposedly the main story. The tale proper after Section II alternates with the Hack's digressions until Section VIII, where the Aeolist episode breaks this rhythm and interrupts the narrative flow altogether, thus indicating that the digressions have entirely taken over the religious allegory. At this point, the Hack is finally in close accordance with those "Authors" known to "inclose Digressions in one another, like a Nest of Boxes" (*Tale* 124). The Hack's description of the nature of digressions is in this sense an exact account of his own practice in the *Tale*:

> *Digressions* in a Book, are like *Foreign Troops* in a *State*, which argue the Nation to want a *Heart* and *Hands* of its own, and often, either *subdue* the *Natives*, or drive them into the most *unfruitful Corners*. (*Tale* 144)

The burden of the introduction and digressions indeed lies heavy on the slim main story. It expresses Swift's mockery of Modern scholarly editions, pretentious hot air and self-advertising. The Hack is in fact enormously

[34] Sections III, V, VII, and IX are announced, Section VIII constitutes an unannounced digression.

productive, showing "the *Modern* Inclination to expatiate upon the Beauty of my own Productions, and display the bright Parts of my Discourse" (*Tale* 132). It is Swift's declared intention to satirize alternately the "*numerous and gross Corruptions in Religion and Learning*" (*Tale* 4). Hence, he exposes religious aberrations in the *Tale*'s allegory of the brothers and introduces abuses in learning and science "*by way of Digressions*" (*Tale* 4).

The *Tale*'s meandering excursions clearly underline the intellectual incoherence of its author (DePorte 1974, 74). In his anecdotal commentary in "Some Thoughts on Free Thinking," Swift makes the claim that the free and uncensored utterance of every thought reveals the chaotic nature, and dormant madness, of the human mind:

> A prelate of the kingdom of Ireland [...] said, that the difference between a mad-man and one in his wits, in what related to speech, consisted in this: That the former spoke out whatever came into his mind, and just in the confused manner as his imagination presented his ideas. The latter only expressed such thought as his judgement directed him to chuse, leaving the rest to die away in his memory. And if the wisest man would at any time utter his thoughts, in the crude undigested manner as they came into his head, he would be looked upon as raving mad.
> (*PW* IV 48)

According to this view, giving direct utterance to the free flow of unprocessed information is madness. The Hack, in his apparent efforts not so much to educate or instruct as to dazzle, absorbs and entraps his readers with his ingenuity, and inevitably falls into exactly this category (DePorte 1974, 76). It is interesting to note that Swift's anecdote and the content of the Hack's digressive writing echo Hobbesian psychology. In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes asserts that

> without Steddinesse, and Direction to some End, a great Fancy is one kind of Madnesse; such as they have, that entring into any discourse, are snatched from their purpose, by every thing that comes to their thought, into so many, and so long digressions, and Parentheses, that they utterly lose themselves: Which kind of folly, I know no particular name for [...] whatsoever is new, or great, and therefore thought fit to be told, withdrawes a man by degrees from the intended way of his discourse. (I; 8; 53,4)

As Wood points out, Swift sympathized with such fears about the dark side of language and the human mind, in spite of his great distrust of the political notions in Hobbes' *Leviathan* (it is, as has been mentioned, a proclaimed target of his *Tale*) (1986, 49). David P. French notes that Swift owned a notable number of works by Hobbes and that he cited and used some Hobbesian notions as authoritative (244). Ehrenpreis argues in this context that "Swift was

as competent as the rest of us to disapprove of certain aspects of a man's work while admiring others" (1985, 69). On the other hand, and very importantly, the immersion in the notions and the style of works which one generally seeks to attack may also be seen as typical of parody and the consequent paradoxical nature of the *Tale*.

Thus, Swift was doubtlessly familiar with this much-quoted Hobbesian remark, as is also demonstrated by the following statement, made in his "Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately Entered Into Holy Orders," which includes advice for young clergymen:

> Whoever only reads, in order to transcribe wise and shiny Remarks, without entering into the Genius and Spirit of the Author; as it is probable he will make no very judicious Extract, so he will be apt to trust to that Collection on all his Compositions; and be misled out of the regular Way of Thinking, in order to introduce those Materials which he hath been at the Pains to gather: And the Product of all this, will be found a manifest incoherent Piece of Patchwork. (*PW* IX 70)

Swift seems to warn authors and critics of the danger of quotation here. Yet, in satiric contexts, we have got to know the Swiftian inclination to create an abundance of such striking statements and "shiny Remarks." Thus, Swift on the one hand demonstrates that it is possible to argue in such ways, and on the other hand takes the satiric opportunity to demolish such beautiful wisdoms. They are destroyed either by their very context (by way of irony, that is) or by an equally beautiful counter-argument just some pages later. Such self-destruction is the fate of the Hack's endeavours.

Hence, the Hack's digressions indicate his madness in Hobbes' and also Swift's sense. As the Hack himself openly confesses, he is a loyal alumnus of Bedlam (*Tale* 176). He belongs to the victims of that "great Fancy" that is "one kind of Madnesse," and that lures him away from his original intention into endless and numerous digressions. It is Swift's satirical intention to make it his reader's fate and trap to follow the Hack on his path, working through his maddening excursions, and thus to be imprisoned in his crazy *tours d'esprit*. The Hack's imagination is "hardmouth'd, and exceedingly disposed to run away with *Reason*," which he experiences as "a very light Rider, and easily shook off" (*Tale* 180).

Francis Bacon completes this picture in mentioning that "The human understanding is no dry light, but receives an infusion from the will and affections; whence proceed sciences which may be called 'sciences as one would.' For what a man had rather were true he more readily believes" (*New Organon*, I; 49; 57). Bacon adds a description of abuses in philosophy which sounds like a comment on the nature of Tubbian schemes:

> But the corruption of philosophy by superstition and an admixture of theology is far more widely spread, and does the greatest harm […] For the contentious and sophistical

> kind of philosophy ensnares the understanding; but this kind, being fanciful and tumid and half poetical, misleads it more by flattery. (I; 65; 66)

The Hack's work is indeed "fanciful and tumid and half poetical," crammed with incoherent, digressive material, and intended to flatter, baffle and mislead the reader. This can be an intellectually pleasing experience if the reader enjoys marvelling over Swift's various parodies and ironies and at the same time does not expect to find a coherent solution. The satiric structure of the Tub seeks to create confusion, shock, and, in the end, awareness, consciousness. Evoking notions of entrapment is the main objective in this process, or as Charles A. Knight points out,

> Consciousness in satire becomes instrumental to a broader attack. Thus the central consciousness of *A Tale of a Tub* ironically embodies the incoherent opportunism of modern writing and the fragmented culture it represents. But it further implies that coherent consciousness may itself be a myth, that the inconsistencies of the author are those of anyone who thinks within the constructs of that culture, and that the perhaps futile efforts of readers to interpret such a text reveal that they share that problem. (204/205)

Swift's Tub envisions fragmented existence. It offers fragmented text, fragmented knowledge, incoherently presented by the Hack *persona*. The multitude of informational bits and scraps the reader is almost forcefully confronted with miserably fails to hide the fact that the *Tale* questions the very possibility of coherent consciousness. If the Tubbian vision of fragmented culture and fragmented minds is to show the reality of Modern culture, even the human predicament, is there in fact a way to think outside "the constructs of that culture"? Swiftian reader entrapment lures us into interpretation of the Hack's exuberant and incoherent treatise, intending to make us fail. The humbling experience such failing brings about in readers is Swift's triumph. Entrapped, we prove ourselves to "share that problem" of incoherent consciousness. Swift is indifferent to our interpretative struggles. The satirist has set his trap, he has done so brilliantly, and that is all his concern.

What lies beneath: Tubbian barrenness

> I conceive therefore, as to the Business of being *Profound*, that it is with *Writers*, as with *Wells*; A Person with good Eyes may see to the Bottom of the deepest, provided any *Water* be there; and, that often, when there is nothing in the World at the Bottom, besides *Dryness* and *Dirt*, tho' it be but a Yard and half under Ground, it shall pass, however, for wondrous *Deep*, upon no wiser a Reason than because it is wondrous *Dark*. (*Tale* 207/208)

Insanity is not only revealed by the self-complimentary exuberance of the Hack's treatise. When the Hack finally informs us that "[t]hrice have I forced my Imagination to make the *Tour* of my Invention, and thrice it has returned empty" (*Tale* 42), the suspicion arises that his discourse is basically hollow. Nor does the Hack's "Experiment" in the Conclusion give his work a more reliable turn: "I am now trying an Experiment very frequent among Modern Authors; which is, to *write upon Nothing*; When the Subject is utterly exhausted, to let the Pen still move on; by some called, the Ghost of Wit, delighting to walk after the Death of its Body" (*Tale* 208).

At this point it is clear that this is not the first time in the *Tale* that the author has tried such an "Experiment," so common with "Modern Authors," but only the first time that it is explicitly announced. Several hiatuses in his text yield evidence of an essential vacuity. To one "*Hiatus in MS*," there is an explanatory footnote that describes the Hack's practice with gaps:

> Here is pretended a Defect in the Manuscript, and this is very frequent with our Author, either when he thinks he cannot say any thing worth Reading, or when he has no mind to enter on the subject, or when it is a Matter of little Moment, or perhaps to amuse his Reader (whereof he is frequently very fond) or lastly, with some Satyrical Intention. (*Tale* 296)

The function of the *Tale*'s hiatuses which tellingly demonstrate the defectiveness of the Hack's writing bears a close resemblance to the hollowness and emptiness of the Tub's design. The gaps, which display a "pretended" "Defect in the Manuscript," are thus intended as a deception; they may deal with "Matters of little Moment" if they deal with anything concrete at all; they are "frequently very fond" of amusing the *Tale*'s readers; and they "cannot say any thing worth Reading," which demonstrates their strategic role and the "Satyrical Intention" behind them. Thus, the gaps in the *Tale* have multiple functions: they ironically expose the deficiencies of the

Modern author and his work; they are meant to amuse and confuse the readers, which is the diversionary intention of the Tub; and they may carry further satirical meaning, which inevitably implicates the author-*persona* and the reader himself. We seem to have run into just another variant of Swift's Tubbian traps. The most prominent of these hiatuses is situated at the heart of the "Digression Concerning Madness," where the Hack is trying to elaborate in mechanistic terms why types of madness multiply, and why they are so various. Having arrived at the very climax of his most pungent definition, there is a gap in the text:

> The present Argument is the most abstracted that ever I engaged in, it strains my Faculties to their highest Stretch; and I desire the Reader to attend with utmost Perpensity; For, I now proceed to unravel this knotty Point.
> * THERE is in Mankind a certain * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
> *Hic multa desiderantur*. *
> And this I take to be a clear Solution of the Matter.
> (*Tale* 170)

This hiatus at the heart of the Hack's painstaking treatise on madness is an omission in the "manuscript." The Modern author, after his eager preamble, flatters himself on the adroit accomplishment of an argument for which there is no evidence. His explanation is clear in the most literal sense that we *cannot see it* (Nash 429). Once more, the author has written on nothing, and this really is "a clear Solution of the Matter." His whole material discourse (in all its senses) on physiological systems is apparently empty of meaning or, to return again to the picture of the Tub, moving around an empty space. The Hack is struggling to conceal his defects, but it becomes obvious that "Hic multa desiderantur" expresses nothing so much as the actual breakdown of the Hack's entire "Physio-Logical" scheme. The *Tale* falls apart, or, as is demonstrated by the cheap Grub Street device of a "defect in the manuscript," the Hack's argument physically evaporates.

The Hack obviously shares the faculties of one of his Bedlamite colleagues, for he is equally "excellent at the Famous Art of *whispering Nothing*" (*Tale* 177) as he is in "the *Art of being Deep-learned, and Shallow-read* (*Tale* 130). As DePorte (1974, 75) states, the Hack is "closed, isolated by pride [...] He knows much, understands little; his aim is to exploit, not comprehend, his material." The mass of the Hack's proud, learned material is self-deceptive. There is no escape from its chronic hollowness: the Hack's ironically remarkable skill of "being *Witty*, upon Occasion, where I could be neither *Wise* nor *Sound*" (*Tale* 209) cannot effectively conceal this Tubbian predicament. As Seamus Deane states, Swift's strategy has the "dual effect of intensifying and of vaporizing" elements in the Hack's vertiginous elaborations:

> The world he creates is packed tight and is also empty. He dislocates the reader by revealing that the momentum of the logic of an argument or of a figure, or of both, can lead or can seem to lead the author into unexpected

> trouble. For the whole notion of authority and control is questioned when the language seems to take on a life of its own, independent of any authorial restraint. And yet to represent that very condition is itself an ingenious exercise in authorial mastery. (2003, 242)

The paradox lies in the fact of how brilliantly the Hack is devised to show the Tubbian nature of his discourse. Hence, Swift's authorial mastery is omnipresent, whereas the Hack becomes the helpless victim of the free-flow of his own pen. The Hack's writing constitutes Swift's ironically brilliant demonstration of how easily (Modern) imagination constructs bulky and complex "*Systems* and *Abstracts*" (*Tale* 145) to conceal emptiness. It shows the vain attempt at a complete collection of all useful human wisdom (usefulness being an important criterion in the Baconian vein), a compendium of all information that contributes to "the Advancement of Universal Knowledge" (*Tale* 106). Such endeavour ends up in nothingness. Swift's *Tale* mocks the futility of the work of all compilers of comprehensive encyclopaedias, anthologies, dictionaries and complete collections. All of these paradoxically point to the empty and endless.

The Hack's presumptuous comprehensiveness is a Swiftian parody and jest on any such attempt, "a jeering negation of any such possibility, a sense of the projector's insane aspiration to an unattainable ordering of life's centrifugal processes" (Rawson 1994, 205). This is the awareness that Swift aims at building in his readers through absorption and entrapment in the Hack's discourse. Like so many of Swift's satiric *persona*e and their fellow Moderns, the Hack spreads out his wit over all creation and "comprehends" everything, "only to reduce everything to nothing" (Kernan 216).

Physical Defamiliarization and the Tub as Materialistic Trap

> For this great Blessing, we are wholly indebted to *Systems* and *Abstracts*, in which the *Modern* Fathers of Learning, like prudent Usurers, spent their Sweat for the Ease of Us their Children. (*Tale* 145/6)

If the Hack's elaborate systems are essentially empty of content, there must be some fault with them. Among the most prominent features of the Hack's writing ranks one that it shares, unsurprisingly, with a tub: materiality, thus materialism. This constitutes another very characteristic step in Swift. Materialism and crude physicality are marked traits of the Hack's discourse, and the reader is in this sense almost physically trapped in the Tubbian schemes the Hack *persona* eagerly presents. Whoever reads the text finds himself entrapped in the Hack's Tub and forced to join him on his sweaty tour.

There are several instances where Swift stresses the physicality of the Hack's endeavours. At one point the Hack contends that the state of physical health of a writer is essential for the inspiration of the literary work. He ironically suggests that wit and profundity of the *Tale* entirely depend on the miserable condition of his body at the time of composition:

> I have recollected, that the shrewdest Pieces of this Treatise, were conceived in Bed, in a Garret: At other times (for a Reason best known to my self) I thought fit to sharpen my Invention with Hunger; and in general, the whole Work was begun, continued, and ended, under a long Course of Physick, and a great want of Money. (*Tale* 44)

The Hack's literary work is thus the direct by-product of a period of illness, hunger, drug consumption, and financial strife: indeed not very promising circumstances. The Hack measures his literary activity in physical, bodily units: "Since my *Vein* is once opened, I am content to exhaust it all at a Running, for the peculiar Advantage of my dear Country, and for the universal Benefit of Mankind." (*Tale* 184) In this description, the Hack's writing is not only immediately linked with physicality, but in his own awkward metaphor an expression of bodily exhaustion and self-wasting (Chalmers 48). The condition of physical debility is also noted in the Hack's concluding remark that he intends to "pause awhile, till I find, by feeling the World's Pulse, and my own, that it will be of absolute Necessity for us both, to resume my Pen" (*Tale* 210). The language Swift uses here and in various other sections of the *Tale* is in a rather disturbing way physical, sexual or scatological. In section IX, the "Digression Concerning Madness," human enthusiasm and zeal is identified as the direct result of an overflow of inspiration, which itself is ascribed to the curious and much-quoted phenomenon of "*Vapours*, ascending from the

lower Faculties to over-shadow the Brain, and there distilling into Conceptions, for which the Narrowness of our Mother-Tongue has not yet assigned any other Name, besides that of *Madness* or *Phrenzy*" (*Tale* 348). In other words, Swift depicts sublimation of the Hack's kind as "displacement upward of the genital function" (Brown 196). Needless to say that Swift's link to the "lower Faculties" is indeed firmly established, and constitutes what Norman O. Brown called Swift's "excremental vision." Moreover, as has already been noted, "[a]ny reader of Jonathan Swift knows that in his analysis of human nature there is an emphasis on, and attitude toward, the anal function that is unique in Western literature" (Brown 179).

What factors account for such excremental traits in Swift? Do they in fact constitute such an unparalleled device, as Brown argues? Or, in the narrower context of the *Tale*: What is the Swiftian aim in such crudely physical descriptions of the Hack's activities and aspirations, which in their healthy form should be intellectual, spiritual? It has to be noted that Swift to some good extent draws from Ancient satiric convention and tradition here. Even if loathing evoked by perverted physical and sexual functions is among the most disturbing and most intense moments in Swift, such are, in the end, traditional features of satire. Swift's strategy of physical reduction expresses in its broadest terms the conventional satirical technique of *amplificatio* and *diminutio* (Schmidt 1977, 42). It aims at exposing the clichés of the new learning (Louis 53), that is, unavailing Modern hubris, moral presumption, euphoric belief in progress and innovation, and thus constitutes Swift's "decisive weapon in his assault on the pretensions, the pride, even the self-respect of mankind" and especially the Moderns (Brown 179). This is a technique we come across extremely frequently in Swift's satires, and one that accounts for much of the bewildering physical imagery in Swift. Such strategic aims are manifest in the characteristic way that Swift's Tubbian satire brings highbrow, learned systems and schemes down to the basic unit of the body. The *Tale* in a process of gradual estrangement completely materializes, equalizes, and corrupts all that in its proud ambition seeks to be ideal, intellectual, hierarchical, and spiritual.

Moreover, it cannot be overemphasized that it is such reductive "shock-satiric" strategy and convention which accounts to a great extent for crudely physical and scatological peculiarities in Swift. Yet, some critics have been tempted directly to link such traits with Swift's personality. Such famed authors, though lesser critics, as Aldous Huxley, who analyzed Swift's work from a psychoanalytical angle, were so disturbed by Swift's physical imagery as to consider it a product of Swift's madness and in such a horrible way exhibiting Swift's "obsessive preoccupation with the visceral and excrementitious subject," showing the author's alleged "temperamental coldness" (104). Psycho-analytical readings, such as Huxley's, apparently did not sufficiently transcend the impact of pessimistic early criticism that relied heavily on biographical factors based on doubtful sources. Today it seems obvious that drawing distinct conclusions on the satirist's personality or to attempt to establish firm and direct connections to his life on the grounds of strategic satiric moves would be rather naïve. However, it would also be naïve to completely exclude Swift's personality from a reading of his major satires, for

this would to some extent mean limiting a study of Swift to the interpretative vacuum his satires often purposely embody. The mythmaking around Swift's person and the impact on views of his work opens up an alluring area of study, and I shall turn to it in the third section of this paper.

Still, it must be remembered that, on one level, Swift draws deeply from convention here. If Jonathan Swift's scatological imagery is pathological, then what of the ancient Christian tradition of linking images of filth to the idea of sin? (Ehrenpreis III 463) What of the satiric tradition of Juvenal or Rabelais? François Rabelais, notorious for his satiric use of bodily functions, especially as performed in his famous satirical series featuring the voyages and escapades of the giants Pantagruel and Gargantua (1532-1564), in fact furnished Swift with much of his inspiration concerning satire on religion and learning as well as mockery on giant-dwarf proportions. What is more, physical defamiliarization was one of Rabelais' most effective techniques. For instance, the idea of drowning a city in urine, adopted by Swift in his description of Gulliver's extinguishing of the fire in the Lilliputian royal palace, is to be found in Rabelais: Gargantua does so by way of introducing himself to the Parisians (Chapter XVI). Thus, even if there is no doubt that Swift's scatological visions are effective tools for shock and entrapment, it must be emphasized that the strategy is far from being genuinely Swift's own but corresponding to satiric convention and tradition. Satiric employment of physical defamiliarization shocks. As with Swiftian satires, reading *Gargantua* has been shocking for many. In a similar vein to Swift criticism, there is a tendency in readers of Rabelais to either consider the author an irreverent hater of mankind, or a writer largely concerned with witty conversation and imagery for its own sake, or to think that there is also the satirist's moral and religious concern hidden in the text. As a matter of fact, the satiric strategy of physical estrangement largely unites these traits.

This notion can easily be expanded to all of Swift's *personae* and satiric butts, along with further scatological eccentricities. Because such visions provoke shock, Swift adopts the technique of estrangement in pursuit of his satiric goals. Swift's satiric reduction of the Hack's overbearing notions and schemes to mere physicality functions rhetorically and strategically to disparage his narrator *persona* and the Modern style that the text hyperbolically represents. Whenever a pompous idea becomes inflated to artificial size, it is returned by way of physical imagery to a mechanical, bodily measure. This move was not at all new or even unique in Swift's time, but, as has been stated, on the contrary was deeply rooted in the Ancient tradition of narrative satire. Hence, Swift was far from being the only writer to adopt this strategy, and the "conflation of hermeneutical sins with the sins of the flesh, and other moral depravity" was in fact "universal in the seventeenth-century" and long before (Affentranger 166). Yet, the Swiftian version of this strategy might be evaluated as uniquely exuberant. In the context of Swift's satire on science, it evokes the notion of science as misrepresentation of nature in a highly rhetorical, effective way. Swift puts erroneous scientific speculation on the same scale as moral misbehaviour, and because he is referring to the errors of natural science, it appears quite fit to him that he should put these aberrations on a par with obtuse physicality and sexual perversion.

Swiftian physical defamiliarization in Viktor Shklovsky's sense represents the literary process of estrangement, the distancing of familiar objects the reality or truth of which this process seeks to expose and reveal to a reader.[35] The focused entity is shown in a different context, manner, or form, and thus made to seem unfamiliar and strange in order to enable a fresh view or critique which has not been possible before. Thus, the reader escapes prejudice and routine perception, as the now estranged objects or ideas are seen anew in a different light. In Swift, this light is often very unpleasant. However, the reader is prompted to perceive, through the *Tale*'s refracted, reduced, and distanced vision, the satirist's sense of the actual or true reality of all the highbrow Tubbian notions and schemes that the Hack names. Moreover, the humour Swift puts in the process of estrangement is a notable and characteristic feature of his satires: the method of defamiliarization enables the cruellest criticism of mankind to be amusing, even delightful, and to make satire popular reading. In Swift's *Tale*, such inner truth paradoxically and tellingly appears in the form of perverted materialism, hence superficiality and conceit. It is very clear that what the Hack presents to the reader is not to be understood as directly representative of the actual Modernity, contemporary new science and learning, or Catholicism and Dissent, which Swift intends to attack, but much more as a distorted literary image intended to baffle and deeply disturb the *Tale*'s readers. Again, this is the shock-satiric and at least potentially awareness-building function of satiric reader entrapment in Swift. Yet, it must be noted that readers of Swift often cannot help having the impression that the text's "shock-satiric" elements leave any objective of satiric awareness-building far behind.

Physical defamiliarization is expressed in the Hack's clumsy anatomical metaphors as well as in Tubbian images such as the mechanical position of an audience, whose mental activity of listening to an orator's speech is described as follows:

> [the listeners] stand with their mouths open, and erected parallel to the Horizon, so as they may be intersected by a perpendicular Line from the Zenith to the Center of the Earth. In which position, if the Audience be well compact, every one carries home a Share, and little or nothing is lost. (*Tale* 60)

To take a particular, clearly defined posture, to open one's mouth and to swallow everything the speaker delivers is the mechanistic version of the intellectual or cognitive process that takes place whenever a public speech is held. In the Introduction, the Hack describes the power of words, again in the context of his discourse on oratorical machines:

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[35] See Shklovsky's application of formalist theory to literature and especially his notion of defamiliarization in his essay on "Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*," first introduced in his study "Art as Technique." I owe the basis of much of the following treatment of Swiftian physical estrangement to discussions held in Professor Dr. Allen Reddick's seminar "Making the Familiar Strange: Swift & Sterne" (English Seminar of the University of Zurich, winter semester 96/97).

> The deepest Account […] is this, That Air being a heavy Body, and therefore (according to the System of **Epicurus*) continually descending, must needs be more […] so, when loaden and press'd down by Words; which are also Bodies of much Weight and Gravity, as it is manifest from those deep *Impressions* they make and leave upon us; and therefore must be delivered from a due Altitude, or else they will neither carry a good Aim, nor fall down with a sufficient Force. (*Tale* 60)

First of all, this description evidently satirizes scientific discourse.[36] However, the learned author's "Physico-logical Scheme" (*Tale* 61) of eloquence in the fashion of a pseudo-discourse on gravity is not only a satirically material exhibition of the vanity of discourse, whether it belongs to the Hack, a charlatan scientist or a fanatic priest. Rather, like the Hack's entire scheme of oratorical machines, it is an ironic Swiftian joke on abstract exaltation. Swift delights in having his Hack invent abstruse physiological schemes and *modi operandi* to attain eloquence. To return to the Ancient-Modern controversy: the Hack takes a typically Modern, mechanical approach to rhetoric, a realm where the Ancient masters doubtlessly excelled. Ironically, he is using the jargon of mechanical scientific studies in order to account for exclusively human intellectual processes.

A telling example of such mechanical approaches to natural phenomena is offered by René Descartes, who in his *Principes de la Philosophie* (1644) argues that

> A quoy l'exemple de plusieurs corps, composez par l'artifice des hommes, m'a beacuoup servy: car je ne reconnois aucune difference entre les *machines que font les artisans* & et les divers corps *que la nature seule compose* [] Et il est certain que tout les *regles* des Mechaniques appartiennent à la Physique, *en forte que toutes les choses qui sont artificielles, sont avec cela naturelles*. Car, *par exemple*, lors qu'une montre marque les heures par le moyen des roües dont elle est faite, cela ne lui est pas moins naturel qu'il est à un arbre de produire ses fruits.
> (IV; 203; 480-481)

The kind of mechanical philosophy as demonstrated in this passage was among the most prominent features of Restoration science, expressing the "view that all natural effects could be reduced to the simple interaction of units of matter in motion" (Hunter 16). It constitutes exactly the type of Cartesian mechanical philosophy, methodical analysis of existence through systematic perception and comprehension of the natural world in

[36] Traugott shows that the passage directly parodies Epicurean and specifically Lucretian atomistic materialism and its notion of sprays of atoms which come out of the mouth of the speaker and create the effect on the hearer by way of the throat to the senses (158).

mechanistic terms that Swift ridicules in his satire. Mechanical philosophy had been built on the authority of mostly two men, René Descartes and Thomas Hobbes, and, unlike many of Hobbes' applications (which to numerous contemporaries were repugnant), Cartesian mechanical theories were further developed and applied in various "new fields of research, from biology to chemistry" (Hunter 16). In Swift's satire, such cases of reductive mechanic understanding of all existence may be considered Tubbian instances of "man's pride in mechanistically over-rationalising the human predicament" (Kiernan 721).[37]

Swift had met with instances of early scientific research as early as during his time at Trinity College, which was closely linked to the Dublin Philosophical Society.[38] The Society's operations indeed foreshadowed many scenes in Swift's later satiric writings, as Ehrenpreis (I 79) states: "astronomical researches which anticipate Laputa, excremental or animal experiments like those in the Academy of Lagado, a toy fleet like the one Gulliver would steal in Blefuscu, a study of spittle such as Swift was to deride in *A Tale of a Tub*, and even a flying island." It needs to be noted that such topics were anything but fresh when Swift composed the *Travels* or even the *Tale*, for such and other "instruments of Swift's ridicule" had already become "commonplaces" and "existed in what to him would seem a framework of absurdity" (Ehrenpreis I 79).

In this same context, the following pseudo-panegyric on the Moderns exhibits an obscenity which the Hack, of course, is completely unaware of,

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[37] Such mechanistic traits can also be found in Locke, who, discussing the "great Parts and Wheels" "of this stupendious Structure of the Universe," equals the cosmos to an enormous machine:

> But how many other extrinsecal, and possibly very remote Bodies, do the Springs of those admirable Machines depend on, which are not vulgarly observed, or so much thought on; and how many are there, which the severest Enquiry can never discover? [...] We see and perceive some of the Motions and grosser Operations of Things here about us; but whence the Streams come that keep all these curious Machines in motion and repair, how conveyed and modified, is beyond our notice and apprehension. (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding* VI; 11, 586-587)

Still, it must be noted that Locke significantly differs from his British empiricist forerunner Hobbes in his division of experience into external (sensation) and internal (reflection), his dualism of body and mind, and especially his moderate Deism (Nidditch ix). In this division, Locke draws from Descartes, who in *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* (1619), his *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, which constituted his first, though unfinished, main philosophical discourse on the correct method for dealing with rational theology or science, divides his argument into "what refers to us" and "what refers to the things themselves": *"Ut autem quod experiamur, in quaestione proposita primo, quidquid ad illam pertinet, in duo membra dividimus: referri enim debet, vel ad nos, qui cognitionis sumus capaces, vel ad res ipsas, quae cognosci possunt*" (Regula VIII, 5, 53).

[38] As Craven (10) points out, the Hack's description of oratorical machines may be seen as a Swiftian parody on scientific discourses such as Narcissus Marsh's "Doctrine of Sounds" that was first presented in 1683 to the Dublin Philosophical Society and later published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society. Swift directly borrows from Marsh's treatise such ponderous terms as "parallel to the horizon," "conveyance of sound," "air and bodies," or "of much weight and gravity" (quoted in Craven 11).

again serving Swift as another instance and example for equation of scientific corruption with sexual perversion:

> THE whole Course of Things, being thus entirely changed between *Us* and the *Antients*; and the *Moderns* wisely sensible of it, we of this Age have discovered a shorter, and more prudent Method, to become *Scholars* and *Wits*, without the Fatigue of *Reading* or of *Thinking*. The most accomplisht Way of using Books at present, is twofold: Either first, to serve them as some Men do *Lords*, learn their *Titles* exactly, and then brag of their Acquaintance. Or Secondly, which is indeed the choicer, the profounder, and politer Method, to get a thorough Insight into the *Index* [...] Men of much Haste and little Ceremony, are content to get in by the *Back-Door*. [...] Thus Men catch Knowledge by throwing their *Wit* on the *Posteriors* of a Book [...] Thus Human Life is best understood by the wise man's Rule of *Regarding the End* (*Tale* 145).

Very tellingly, Modern scholars and critics are reduced in an obscene way to crude physicality, sodomy, sexual violence. The method to acquire "Arts" put forward by the Hack leaves no doubt that he in fact seems to favour some kind of rape of books in order to find truth. It is quite obvious that Swift plays with his sexual implications here, letting the Hack struggle to explain some elegant and profound way to acquire knowledge. In his close study of Swift's strategy of transformation and degradation of symbols and metaphors, Reddick holds this to be a striking example "which provides a crude, graphic, yet still symbolic movement which displaces higher symbolism" of "reading and interpretation" to "display the degradation of modern forms of reading, thinking, and behaving," ironically proposing "that the quickest and most appropriate way to truth is through *buggery*, or sodomy, the direct line to the *profound*, the *fundament*, the deep bottom or anus" (1992, 242). Reddick offers a telling description of this transforming process observable in Tubbian passages, noting that Swift

> follows his own path, the *digressive* way, in which his mode and the encoded subtext converge in a violation, dissecting aggressive penetration of the body, or *journey inward*. The *digressive road*, then, becomes a symbol of *penetration*, yet remains graphic as well in its depiction. Furthermore, it retains a structural and rhetorical coherence, even in its madness. Swift will use traditional public symbols, such as *the heart*, and, while toying with the accepted symbolic meaning or interpretation of the *heart*, in fact literalizes it and makes it (and the reaching or touching of it) symbolic of something else, of destruction, degradation, and horror. (In Swift, to *touch the heart*, an image of beauty, its meaning dependent

> upon the conventional symbolism of the heart as the seat of love, of passion, of truth, may in fact constitute cutting one's way into a body and holding the organ in one's hand.) This method of degrading and transforming symbols and metaphors is, I believe, unique to Swift, but if not unique, is at least more dramatic in Swift than in any other writer, and nowhere more dramatic than in *A Tale of a Tub* (1992, 243).

The process described here is the specifically Swiftian physical defamiliarization, which, as Reddick argues, constitutes a journey inward, expressing sexual violence and almost demonic aggression towards the body instead of leading to the deep wisdom aimed for by the Hack. It embodies the Hack's ultimate digression, or perversion, and envisions the structurally coherent system of madness, forcing itself on the Hack's symbols, degrading them, making them express violence and physical crudeness, and, in the same way, threatening to invade the reader's body and mind. I am inclined to call this method inward, Swift's knife, this "symbol of penetration" Tubbian, and its frightening and threatening "structural and rhetoric coherence" Swift's Tub, the Tubbian predicament envisioned by his brilliant *Tale*, leading to the effect of reader entrapment. For, it is one of my main objectives in the present study to demonstrate that it is in exactly the way Reddick describes the process of physical defamiliarization above that Swift's image of the Tub, mockingly introduced as a symbol but stubbornly insisting on its literal meaning, "retains a structural and rhetorical coherence, even in its madness" and forces its threatening presence and physicality upon the reader.

Another instance of excessive materialism and crude physicality is to be found in the practices of the Aeolists. For the members of the Aeolist sect, who are described in an authorial footnote as "*All Pretenders to Inspiration whatsoever*" (*Tale* 150), spirit, inspiration, and learning is wind. In their neat syllogism, "*Words are but Wind; and Learning is nothing but Words;* Ergo, *Learning is nothing but Wind*" (*Tale* 153). As has been shown, the Hack would no doubt agree that "*Learning is nothing but Words*," and it is quite obvious that the Hack and the Aeolists (among the various other zealots the reader comes across in the Hack's treatise) are indeed kindred souls.

As David Nokes states, Swift had come to hate the mechanical manoeuvring of formulas as early as during his time at Trinity College, when such rhetorical and logical manipulations were taught in his lessons of disputation, a formal system of arguments performed following strict syllogistic conventions. Still, syllogisms provided him with inspiration and "sound training for some of his own favourite satiric techniques" (1985, 12). Swift makes fun of abstract reason and reasoning here, pointing his finger at the fact that reason establishes only partial connections and thus draws limited conclusions from observable evidence in nature, relies on a belief that by using logic we can determine the indeterminable and thus leads to perversion and madness. In addition, as usual in the *Tale*, wherever there is deception or physical reduction, the image of the Tubbian trap cannot be far away:

> At other times were to be seen several Hundreds link'd together in a circular Chain, with every Man a Pair of Bellows applied to his Neighbour's Breech, by which they blew up each other to the Shape and Size of a *Tun*; and for that Reason, with great Propriety of Speech, did usually call their Bodies, their *Vessels*. (*Tale* 153)

What Swift presents at this point is Tubbian hot air in the most literal sense. The Aeolist method of seeking inspiration is nothing more than letting wind pass: Aeolists take *inspiration* literally and blow wind into each other's posteriors. For the Aeolists, wind, that is, "a surface, mechanical phenomenon[,] becomes the inner spiritual essence of all things" (Pinkus 1963, 169). The image of the Tub is very prominent: the Aeolists' materialism, the circular chain they form, and especially their practice of blowing "each other to the Shape and Size of a *Tun*" are in the end explicit reminders of the programmatic image of Swift's arch-trap. In a contemporary context, Swift especially associated Dissent with such notions of enthusiasm and inspiration. The Aeolists function as Puritans claiming the truth of their inner voices and their being individually inspired by the Holy Ghost (Walsh 2003, 171). Swift's judgement of such inspiration is clear: the bodily "*Vessels*" filled with air correspond to the Tub's barrenness, and ironically imply that the Aeolist attempt at inspiration is literally good for nothing.

At this point it has become quite clear that the *Tale* is replete with images of Tubbian traps. As Palmieri notes, "As a whole, and in all its parts, Swift's tale tells of tubs or other circular vessels containing nothing, or worse than nothing, inside" (1985, 161). The reader, unlike the Hack, becomes aware that the materialist system zealously constructed in the *Tale* is in fact an apparatus of Swiftian ironies that plays both on the vanity of the Hack's literary aspirations and his materialism. The Tubbian materialist theory demonstrates a potential inherent in language to build logical arguments (like the Aeolist syllogism on wind), to construct systems on ridiculous premises, as well as the ability of such systems to develop a logic of their own, completely losing touch with reality and violently forcing themselves upon others.

However, this is by no means to simplify or iron out the complexity and difficulty of Swift's texts. The Tub's materialism is a very basic constitutive of the *Tale*'s general trait of subversiveness. There is in fact something painfully coarse about the literal-mindedness with which Swift's Hack describes Holy Water as Peter's "famous Universal *Pickle*" (*Tale* 109), thus scoffing at the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (Nokes 1978, 54). The crude materiality of such literal-mindedness is not only a basic feature of the "Systems and Abstracts" (*Tale* 145) the Hack describes and endorses, but simultaneously an essential strategic characteristic of Swift's Tubbian tale. The evident futility of the Hack's ambitious writing, which reduces values in the realms of religion, philosophy, and art to a material origin, ironically pronounces its own devastating verdict on any such enterprise. More than once Swift's visions are on the very verge of being unbearable for the reader to cope with. The shock and revulsion evoked by the *Tale*'s estranged materialist vision is intended to prompt the reader to perception of the

conceit and vain self-aggrandisement of the Moderns' claims at valuable, complete, independent and true knowledge. In the face of lofty human aspirations, ideals and pride, Swift uncompromisingly draws our attention to the physical realities of human existence, and in doing so pursues the goal of reader entrapment in disgust, resultant humiliation and humbling experience.

Moreover, this applies to all kinds of human vanity, as a glance at Swift's scatological poem "The Lady's Dressing Room" shows

> Thus finishing his grand Survey,
> Disgusted *Strephon* stole away
> Repeating in his amorous Fits,
> Oh! *Celia*, *Celia*, *Celia* shits! (115-118)

It makes sense to study such passages from Swift's scatological and allegedly misogynist poems along with his materializing and literalizing moves in a *Tale of a Tub* and throughout his satires. As Margaret Anne Doody (1988, 88) points out, the intended effect of Tubbian disillusionment is indeed very similar in Swift's attacks against female vanity, which include a criticism of the social reduction of women to some kind of abstract "goddesses or angels": "Swift is one of the partners taken in by the women writers when they wish to censure the false idealization of women, the demand that a romantic life should exist apart from the physical; he shares their suspicion that women are being socially used. Swift attracts because he does not ignore dirt" (87). In other words, romantic ideals are shattered by Swiftian satire in exactly the same way as are ideals and proud Modern notions of learning and spirituality.

Defamiliarizing and materializing satire wants to humble, to counteract the proud idealization of man's possibilities which Swift always abhorred. Swift wants to make the Hack's readers perceive, not unlike Strephon, who

> […] soon would learn to think like me,
> And bless his ravisht Sight to see
> Such Order from Confusion sprung,
> Such gaudy Tulips rais'd from Dung. (141-144)

Unsurprisingly, such humbling experience has not been much liked. This can in part be explained by the fact that it has often been considered to be the very human condition to pursue intellectual or spiritual ideals, to raise the focus of aspirations above materiality and to try to aspire to something higher than the basic, physical or animal level that is part of human existence. At the same time, there is human weakness, failure, or unwillingness to admit that such ideals have not been achieved or realized. This is what Swift despotically points his finger at and forces his readers to see time and again. The shock many readers experience created the image of Swift as a notoriously and pathologically scatological writer, which even to this day has partly managed to outshine his literary fame and the achievement of his satire.

The *Tale* is expression of stubborn and almost demonic misreading of text, which in its extremity leads to the horrible vision of physicality forcing itself on spirituality, the body completely conquering the mind. The result of this, as Swift makes quite clear, is madness.

"Dazzled their Eyes": Figurative Discourse as Trap

> Metaphors [...] openly professe deceipt; to admit them into Councell, or Reasoning, were manifest folly.[39]

In accordance with this Hobbesian remark, the Hack *persona* at one point asserts the deceiving character of literary tropes, but asks his readers: "How fading and insipid do all Objects accost us that are not convey'd in the Vehicle of *Delusion*" (*Tale* 172)? In his introduction, the Hack-author describes his Grub Street colleagues' use of figurative discourse:

> the *Grubean* Sages have always chosen to convey their Precepts and their Arts [...] shut up within the Vehicles of Types and Fables, which having been perhaps more careful and curious in adorning, than was altogether necessary, it fared with these Vehicles after the usual Fate of Coaches over-finely painted and gilt; that the transitory Gazers have so dazzled their Eyes, and fill'd their Imaginations with the outward Lustre, as neither to regard or consider, the Person or the Parts of the Owner within. (*Tale* 66)

Spectacular "Types and Fables" seem to be a speciality of hack writing. "*Grubean* Sages," according to this description, belong to that category of "philosophers" "whose converting Imaginations dispose them to reduce all things into *Types*" and who are very fond of "refining what is Literal into Figure and Mystery" (*Tale* 189/90). However, as the passage cited above suggests, there is a problem with metaphysical discourse in Grub Street fashion. Hack metaphors are described, whether this is for their brilliant "outward Lustre" or for further reasons to be mentioned below, as tending to obstruct or prevent access to inner truths.

Notwithstanding, the Hack repeatedly encourages his readers to look for hidden meanings in his writing. Like the "prime Productions" of Grub Street his work has "beautiful Externals for the Gratification of superficial Readers" as well as "darkly and deeply couched under" it "the most finished and refined Systems of all Sciences and Arts" (*Tale* 67). The author insists that "where I am not understood, it shall be concluded, that something very useful and profound is coucht underneath" (*Tale* 46). He is complaining about the "superficial Vein" so common with "Readers of the present Age" and tries hard to make his readers see the profundity of his work. It is the Hack's firm conviction that all the reader has to do in order to recognize the momentous truths and depths of his writing is to see that

[39] Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civill*. (1651) 2 vols. Ed. G.A.J. Rogers and Karl Schuhmann. Bristol: Thoemmes, 2003, I.8 54.

> *Wisdom* is a *Fox*, who after long hunting, will at last cost you the Pains to dig out: 'Tis a *Cheese*, which by how much the richer, has the thicker, the homelier, and the courser Coat; and whereof to a judicious Palate, the *Maggots* are the best. 'Tis a *Sack-Posset*, wherein the deeper you go, you will find it the sweeter. *Wisdom* is a *Hen*, whose *Cackling* we must value and consider, because it is attended with an *Egg*; But then, lastly, 'tis a *Nut*, which unless you chuse with Judgment, may cost you a Tooth, and pay you with nothing but a *Worm*. (*Tale* 66)

As metaphors become the Hack's basis for thought (DePorte 1974, 70), imagination is substituted for reason. Yet, as the passage cited above demonstrates, the Hack's imagination is not very successful. Although his figurative description intends to show that wisdom is always to be found on the inside of things whereas the outside is useless and obstructs access to meaning, the truth of this point is undermined by the Hack's own art. The cheese and the nut may well have worms inside. Thus, in one sense the Hack's discourse is in fact literally *profound*.[40] The Hack's definition of wisdom is Swift's parody of an unsuccessful attempt at figurative discourse that once more shows the Hack's materialism and leaves an impression of physical decay on the reader. The Hack struggles to elaborate the deep wisdom of his tropes, but contrary to his stated intention, his metaphorical figures "strongly assert that insides can be rotten or ugly" (Palmieri 1985, 157). His pretence at deep meaning is unintentionally, ironically, that is, undermined from within. Consequently, his metaphors collapse pathetically. As Francus (54/5) states, the Hack's "converting imagination fuses and confuses signifiers and signifieds; reason is not operating to make distinctions, much less judgements." The Hack himself is entirely unconscious of this crosscurrent in his learned discourse. It is up to the reader to notice his miserable failure, ironically performed by Swift, or as Reddick observes,

> Swift's great satire toys with symbolic modes of reading (religious mystery, scriptural hermeneutics, typology), modes which promise a profound vision into the inner truth and the *heart, head,* and *spirit*, and, while tempting the reader into reading his work in this symbolic hermeneutic, telling him that deep mysteries are lurking in the symbolic use of numbers, rituals, objects, in spirit and wind, etc., in fact discredits such a mode of interpretation. (1992, 243)

Thus, the much-valued maggots in the Hack's cheese, standing for deep wisdom, are on one level ironic signs of his authorial deficiency and deceit. In Swift's time, the implication conveyed here would have been even clearer, for the word "maggot" already carried the meaning of a whim or conceit. On a second level, the reader is made conscious that they are ironically

[40] lat. *pro* + *fundus*, "bottom, firmament, place of filth." Cf. Reddick, Allen. "The Way Inward; or, Swift's Knife." *Symbolik von Weg und Reise*. Ed. Paul Michel. Bern: Peter Lang, 1992.

appropriate to the content of all Tubbian scholarly works, hence to the Modern authors that Swift intends to ridicule in the *Tale*. Consequently, the Hack's statement that the reader may find profound truths in his metaphors, which by way of the maggots in the cheese or the worm in the nut has been ironically exposed as false, in this satiric sense becomes ironically true. The Hack is right: there *is* wisdom in his metaphors. This move is very typical in Swift, as Nokes argues:

> Swift was a lifelong punster, a man whose love of riddles, verbal games, 'pun-ic wars,' crambo, and Anglo-Latin doggerel demonstrated his adherence to the motto '*vive la bagatelle*'. Yet he shared with his fellow Dubliner, Joyce, an interest in pun at a deeper level, as a form of ironic revelation. Epiphanies, Joyce called them; acts of verbal magic that could transform old words into new ideas. Swift's puns are not so much epiphanies as incarnations, a constant process of words becoming flesh and spirit becoming substance. Swift transubstantiates words into things as a means of 'proving' the physical origins of all visionary phenomena. (1978, 49)

In Traugott's summary of this Tubbian predicament: "Pursue maggots and you will have wisdom; pursue wisdom and you will have maggots" (1992, 164). In such instances the reader notices the *Tale*'s basic feature of circularity. We are given a full spin of Swift's tub-trap. The Hack's figurative discourse is corrupted and deceptive, muddled by awkward, unwieldy signifiers and lacking any clearly signified content. Yet, it may still speak the truth. However, the reader has to work the meaning out himself in order to escape satiric entrapment. With regard to the *Tale*'s various allusions and insights, it is ironically good advice for the reader to "chuse with Judgment" in order to make the best of a bad bargain. Otherwise it appears to be the very nature of Tubbian wisdom to "cost you a Tooth, and pay you with nothing but a Worm" (*Tale* 298).

Interestingly, as Knox points out, the fox functioned in Antiquity as "the symbol of the *eiron*" (1973, 627). *Eiron* was a coarse term of blame referring to any variety of sly deception with overtones of ridicule. It initially referred to Socrates' anecdotal pose of understatement and self-depreciation (as portrayed in Plato's dialogues), and originated the first form of irony, comic irony of "praise through blame." In Greek comedy, it was the character of the "dissembler", who, typically understating his intellect, triumphed over the alazon, the self-deceiving boaster. Yet, of course, a symbolic reading of the fox is precisely what Swift's irony ridicules in the Hack's paragraph on insides and outsides, since symbolic reading in the Hack's sense means to painfully "dig out" the fox, to discover the worm in a nut. Moreover, as the Hack states about Modern "Mythology and Hieroglyphick," to perceive hidden meanings is to express a typically Modern skill, for "it is not easy to conceive, how any Reader of a Modern Eye and Taste could over-look them" (Tale 97). Here Swift offers a circular, ironic warning of entrapment awaiting too eager readers: it

may be fruitless to dig out ironies. In addition, the job requires skills condemned in the Tale: the warning is ironically circular, because it is based on a symbolic reading of the Hack's fox, that is, a kind of reading that Swift's irony elsewhere in this passage undermines.

Irony in most general terms consists of two parts: the directly stated appearance of things and the indirectly deducible truth. Hence, the reader is required to infer the author's original or intended meaning and thus to locate the boundary between the indirect and direct statements. Nonetheless, as is demonstrated by the Hack's fox as a symbol that may work in the midst of hack metaphors that are pitifully out of order, Swift's irony is different in that one instance may interfere in an environment where a greater irony is already operating, so that the latter is questioned by the former, and vice versa. This irony exposes the Hack's profundity as a corruption of the harmonizing and triumphant truth that supposedly lies inside metaphors, and at the same time offers us the Hack's symbol of the fox-*eiron*, which not only documents the former authorial intervention (in suggesting that there is irony in play) but also questions it. Which choice is the reader supposed to make? There is no Swift available to give advice, for the master has left the stage to his Hack assistant. This particular feature of Swift's circular irony and satire runs through the entire Tubbian tale.

When we turn from Swift the satirist to Swift the preacher, we find the following judgement in his "Letter to a Young Gentleman," which damns the habit of young ambitious priests to fill their sermons with sophisticated expressions and definitions: "THE first [fault] is the frequent Use of obscure Terms […] I do not know a more universal, inexcusable and unnecessary Mistake among the Clergy of all Distinctions, but especially the younger Practitioners." Swift recommends "the Method observed by the famous Lord *Falkland*," who, "when he doubted whether a Word were perfectly intelligible or no, he used to consult one of his Lady's Chambermaids, (not the Waiting-woman, because it was possible she might be conversant in Romances,) and by her Judgment was guided, whether to receive or reject it" (*PW* IX 65). Thus, at least in his function as representative of the clergy and advisor of young priests, Swift clearly recommends simplicity.

As Walsh states, "Many of Swift's most significant and exemplary religious statements […] use a simpler, more direct, and altogether less playful voice" (2003, 161). The prescription of plain language may be looked upon as the positive behind Swift's parody of obscure writers in the *Tale* and of professional jargon in *Gulliver's Travels*. Kelly notes that "Swift satirizes solutions to verbal obscurity that would radically alter the traditional forms of the English language with Modern innovations." (2002, 88) Sermons should be understood by anyone, and with some credit this may be expanded to all kinds of speech or text intended for the public and aimed to be understood by people of various educational and social backgrounds. Here we meet Swift the linguistic conservative of *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712), who insists on simplicity of words, stylistic propriety and who recommends standardization in spelling and punctuation.[41] Swift strongly

[41] Kelly notes that Swift's *Proposal* reflects his own ambiguity: "his wish on the one hand for

dislikes texts which are only meant to show their author's erudition (which is quite obviously the Hack's design) and which are almost impossible for a wider audience to appreciate:

> ALTHOUGH, as I have already observed, our *English* Tongue be too little cultivated in this Kingdom; yet the Faults are nine in ten owing to Affectation, and not to the want of Understanding. […] In short, that Simplicity, without which no human Performance can arrive to any great Perfection, is no where more eminently useful than in this. I HAVE been considering that Part of Oratory, which relates to the moving of the Passions: This, I observe, is in Esteem and Practice among some Church Divines, as well as among all the Preachers and Hearers of the *Fanatick* or *Enthusiastick* strain. (*PW* IX 68)

The Hack's style is thus in close correspondence with his state of mind and is meant to be Swift's satiric representation of abuses in religion and learning, committed by zealous clerics as well as scholars. Needless to say that, on the one hand, we are far from finding any such direct didactics in Swift's satires and that, on the other hand, Swift in all his polemical writings obviously very much rejoiced in parodying such styles of politeness and erudition, even to the greatest perfection. Hence, paradoxically, Swift's writings are in fact characterized by great linguistic freedom. Moreover, it seems only obvious and fair enough to state that Swift himself is rather far from free of pride in his own great linguistic skills which lead him to the enjoyment of the highly sophisticated game of satiric irony. As a matter of fact, Swift even privately admits to such a foible in a letter to his cousin Thomas:

> I have a sort of vanity or foiblesse, I do not know what to call it, and which I would fain know if you partake of: it is – not to be circumstantial – that I am overfond of my own writings; I would not have the world think so, for a million, but it is so, and I find when I write what pleases me I am Cowley to myself and can read it a hundred times over. I know it is a desperate weakness, and has nothing to defend it but its secrecy […]. (quoted in Ehrenpreis I 178)

There is another paradox in Swift, because his admiration for his own linguistic skill stands in stark contrast to the advice he offers concerning simplicity of style in sermons. Swift may ironically beat about the bush as much as he likes concerning secrecy and shameful confession: his satiric work *embodies* and demonstrates the love and admiration he has for his own literary genius. Still, even if the Hack's treatise obviously differs from sermons in generic terms, it is originally meant to express nothing other than Swift's admirable and artful model of how *not* to write a text.

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some regulation of language and on the other, his suspicion of instant (as opposed to ancient) institutions, such as an academy" (89).

A Trap "Given to Rotation" and Swift's Absence

> In the same way, two people gazing at the night sky may both be looking at the same collection of stars, but one will see the image of a plough, and the other will make out a dipper. The 'stars' in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable.[42]

In his mindless devotion to whatever is new, the Hack's opinions are persistently inconsistent. The Hack may "contradict his own findings, with the utmost complacency, and he has no firm, even momentarily firm, opinion" (Williams 1958, 137). As has frequently been pointed out, Swift's narrator-*persona* in *A Tale of a Tub* is in his inconsistencies even more elusive than the main protagonist in *Gulliver's Travels*. Unlike a character in a novel (building and developing his/her personality realistically, as in the *Bildungsroman)*, the *Tale*'s Hack is used like Gulliver as a rhetorical device that allows Swift to change perspectives frequently and thus to pursue his manifold satiric objectives.

Looking for Swift behind the mask of his narrator is tricky. This, of course, poses some serious problems to the entrapped reader, searching for an underlying authorial line or, in Iser's sense, trying to join the "stars" in Swift's text. The feature of the Hack's instability and short memory may in general terms be considered a typical trait of satire. The traditional architectonics and organization of satiric images exhibits a "newsreel technique of rapid, abrupt shifts," which, intensifying "the already powerful tendencies to fragmentation," underscores the "disorderliness, the perversity, the sterility, and the meaninglessness inherent in the components of the satiric world" (Kernan 215). The Hack is evidently indifferent to or unaware of his shifting positions and like "the *Commonwealth*," or his own Tub, he appears to be "too apt to *fluctuate*" (*Tale* 40/41) in his assumptions. At one point in his *Tale*, he praises the productions of Modern writers (thus including his own work) for being *"light* enough to swim upon the Surface for all Eternity" (*Tale* 32). This statement is obviously at odds with the Hack's avowed fondness for deep writing and reading. The Hack professes to both "that Wisdom, which converses about the Surface" and "that pretended Philosophy, which enters into the Depth of Things, and then comes gravely back with Informations and Discoveries, that in the inside they are good for nothing" (*Tale* 173).

It is no surprise then, that after having expressed his preference for the insides of things, with the accompanying defects, the Hack unscrupulously turns to the outside. In his Digression Concerning Madness, this self-contradiction becomes even more clear when he confesses to an open liking for deception:

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[42] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader. Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, p. 18.

> And first, with Relation to the Mind or Understanding; 'tis manifest, what mighty Advantages Fiction has over Truth […] because Imagination can build nobler Scenes, and produce more wonderful Revolutions than Fortune or Nature will be at Expence to furnish. (*Tale* 171/2)

Deceptive fiction is preferred to harsh reality. This is a commonplace argument as old as art or literature which will never lose its topicality. However, the *Tale* is a telling illustration of the noble "Scenes" and "wonderful Revolutions" imagination in the Hack's sense can produce. In *New Organon*, Bacon recommends the opposite procedure: "The human understanding is of its own nature prone to abstractions and gives substance and reality to things which are fleeting. But to resolve nature into abstractions is less to our purpose than to dissect her into parts" (I; 51; 58). Ironically, the Hack follows exactly this tack in what is the most emphatic, definitely the most cruel and offensive expression of his preference for superficiality:

> in most Corporeal Beings […] the *Outside* hath been infinitely preferable to the *In*: Whereof I have been farther convinced from some late Experiments. Last Week I saw a Woman *flay'd*, and you will hardly believe, how much it altered her Person for the worse. Yesterday I ordered the Carcass of a *Beau* to be stript in my Presence; when we were all amazed to find so many unsuspected Faults under one Suit of Cloaths. (*Tale* 173)

It is in such moments that the *Tale*'s physical coarseness and cruelty become most disturbing. Still, this passage must be seen in the light of Swift's satirical strategy of physical defamiliarization pointed out before. In the ensuing process of dealing with the Hack's physical metaphors and the attempt of liberating oneself of entrapment, Bacon offers, again ironically, some good advice:

> Contemplation of nature and of bodies in their simple form break up and distract the understanding, while contemplations of nature and bodies in their composition and configuration overpower and dissolve the understanding. […] These kinds of contemplations should therefore be alternated and taken by turns; that so the understanding may be rendered at once penetrating and comprehensive, and the inconveniences above mentioned, with the idols which proceed from them, may be avoided. (*New Organon* I; 52; 60)

The Hack is completely incapable of such "alternating" procedure. Obviously, his inclination for outsides, thus superficiality, is not only demonstrated by the intended content of his text, but also by his bitterly ironic and obnoxious inability to see either the extreme violence and viciousness of his dissecting

experiment or the emblematic resonance of his statement. The Hack's anecdote does not express the intended praise of superficiality, but a Swiftian attack on inhuman science and scholarly pride, as well as on superficiality in the sense of pride in appearance:

> The least consequence of flaying is its effect on the victim's beauty. The agony is what matters. Only grotesque immorality would see things so far out of proportion: pride is so blind that hellish pain holds less terror for it than bad looks. Ostensibly, the anecdote shows the value of a good complexion; really, Swift is saying that irrational vanity will consider ugliness the most deplorable result of being skinned alive. (Ehrenpreis I 224)

Moreover, the Hack is totally unaware that his description of the alleged physical imperfections of the insides of human beings may also provide a telling metaphor for moral weakness. In the same sharply ironic and monstrous way the Hack confuses anatomical dissection (if the flaying of a human being may be thus called) with the philosophical or scientific ambition to study the inner truth of the reality of things, the Hack-narrator's apparent intention to state a literal platitude stands in stark contrast to the potential figurative meaning the reader may perceive in his utterance.

Consequently, what happens in this passage expressing the Hack's preference for outsides or superficiality is exactly the same as with the paragraph defining wisdom as a fox, where he unluckily tried to show the primacy of insides. The Hack-author's assertions are, once again, undermined by their own elaboration. Swift, as the implied author, ironically animates the Hack's statements by giving them a pseudo-elaborate form "in order to distort them, point out their limitations, and divide them against themselves" (Phiddian 2). However, Swift never tells us so, and the reader has to work painfully through the cruel shock-satiric imagery of the passage above to come to his own, in Bacon's way, "alternating" conclusion.

The Hack takes pains to develop a clear demarcation of insides and outsides, but at every point Swift shatters that differentiation. Swift has the Hack crazily establish oppositions (insides vs. outsides) before reversing the value attached to each side. Consequently, each of the Hack's intended positive characterizations ironically comes out negative. The Hack's inside/outside dichotomy is in fact very misleading. When the Hack, dissecting a body, claims to examine the inside of a human being, he is in fact and obviously enough only dealing with another surface. What is inside to the physical-minded Hack is still exterior to inner mental and spiritual human existence. In his exposure of such medical or Modern delusion Swift seems to suggest that scientific empiricism may enhance our understanding of the material world, but can "never reveal to us the nature of the moral realities which underlie it and which are man's" (and Swift the satirist's) "most vital concern" (DePorte 1974, 99).

Swift's *Tale* indeed is not a very pleasant Tub to sit in. After all, the choices are all equally bad. Totally oblivious to his own former statements, the Hack

maniacally favours profundity at one time and superficiality at another, each time unconsciously undermining his present choice and creating a dialectical tension or vacuum between the two opposites. This double negative, reversal, or criss-crossing in the Hack's discourse constitutes narrative satire and consequently satiric reader entrapment in generic terms. Narrative satire is "open-ended," "dialogical," hence "structurally chiastic" (Palmieri 1985, 152). After having elaborated a preference for one choice, narrative satire proceeds to advocate its exact opposite. As a result, following Palmieri, "the dialogue between opposite and alternate views remains critical but unresolved" (1985, 151).

Due to this chiastic-satiric drive, the Hack-author's attitudes are tub-like, constantly in motion, or as the Hack would have it, form a trap "given to Rotation" (*Tale* 40). They shift and can scarcely be pinned down to clear positions. This Tubbian slipperiness is very neatly described in the Epistle Dedicatory, which ironically reminds us of Iser's view of the interaction between text and reader:

> […] to fix upon Particulars, is a Task too slippery for my slender Abilities. If I should venture in a windy Day, to affirm to *Your Highness*, that there is a large Cloud near the *Horizon* in the Form of a *Bear*, another in the *Zenith* with the Head of an *Ass*, a third to the Westward with Claws like a *Dragon*; and *Your Highness* should in a few Minutes think fit to examine the Truth, 'tis certain, they would all be changed in Figure and Position, new ones would arise, and all we could agree upon would be, that Clouds there were, but that I was grossly mistaken in the *Zoography* and *Topography* of them. (*Tale* 35)

Unlike Iser's notions of reception theory, this passage does not emphasize potential openness of textual interpretation and the reader's crucial role of giving meaning to text, but insists on wilful, perverse textual openness, ironically caused by the Hack's authorial weakness and leading to disorientation and resultant reader entrapment. The passage shows the author's unreliability, the Hack's inability to offer any permanent solution to the issues he discusses. All "we could agree upon" is that there has been much talk about insides and outsides, but the Hack's mad classifications prove unhelpful, because they are, like clouds, constantly blurred by their own movement. In his definitions of insides and outsides the Hack-author is "grossly mistaken in the *Zoography* and *Topography* of them" for his beliefs are constantly "changed in Figure and Position" by his enthusiasm.[43]

In the constant interplay of shifting or opposing stances, the Hack's *Tale* becomes almost immune to critical attack, for not only does it criticize specific attitudes and abuses, but, being itself an expression of these very abuses, it also constantly attacks its own inconsistent positions. There seems no

[43] As we have seen, in the Aeolist understanding (a materialist world-view doubtlessly very close to the Hack's own), wind equals learning, enthusiasm, and fanaticism.

stable ground available to the reader enabling an orientation of any kind. Given the seeming absence of the real author, Swift himself, all the reader directly gets from the text is that it is "too apt to *fluctuate*" (*Tale* 40/41). Additionally, all that is left for the reader to do is attack Swift's *persona*e, an inclination which is doubtlessly intended by the author, or look for Swift's implicit meaning, which is highly problematic. Swift's slippery *Tale* makes interpretation at any point look doubtful, yet the *Tale* always maintains that one specific reading is incorrect. To make things worse, Swift himself slyly denies any direct assistance in such a struggle.

This seems indeed a perfectly rotating trap: the reader feels that he is in an unpleasant balancing act on the surface of a slippery tub, and Swift does not offer a helping hand in the emergency. As Marilyn Francus points out, it is always Swift who wins: "One can only expose the slyness of Swift's rhetorical strategy, and by doing so, Swift emerges triumphant, for his readers are forced to acknowledge the power of his craft" (51). The peculiar Tubbian characteristic of "Rotation" (*Tale* 40) and circularity, the blurriness produced by almost universal attack, is anticipated in the Preface, where the Hack declares that

> it is with *Wits* as with *Razors*, which are never so apt to *cut* those they are employ'd on, as when they have *lost their Edge*. Besides, those whose Teeth are too rotten to bite, are best of all others, qualified to revenge that Defect with their Breath. (*Tale* 49)

The Hack's work seems more often than not to have lost a simple, one-dimensional, satiric edge. His fluctuating defences (at once alternating and self-contradictory) and his attacks based on incongruous binary positions might in his own clumsy figurative style be analogously expressed as bad breath, which, as a result of blunt and rotten teeth, prevent one from biting in a positive direction. This is precisely what makes reader entrapment so unpleasant. It is this feature that makes the Hack's "Divine Treatise" (*Tale* 124) so offensive to many readers, and it seems to be the very nature of Swift's *Tale* to disturb any reader enthralled with it. Hence, with regard to satiric reader entrapment, the Hack's "Wits" and "Razors" are indeed very "apt to cut those they are employ'd on."

The Tub's Dialectical Extremism, Circularity and Self-Centredness

> I HAVE now with much Pains and Study, conducted the Reader to a Period, where he must expect to hear of great Revolutions (*Tale* 105).

As Brian A. Connery notes, suspicions concerning the adequacy of human reason and mind are not only frequent in the works of Swift, but prevalent throughout the Restoration and the early eighteenth century, a period in which the conflict between individual reason and the power of imagination and passion were much-discussed (1990, 166). John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) expresses such sceptical views tellingly, suggesting that

> A degree of madness is found in most men. I shall be pardoned for calling it by so harsh a name as madness, when it is considered that opposition to reason deserves that name, and is really madness; and there is scarce a man so free from it, but that if he should always, on all occasions, argue or do as in some cases he constantly does, would not be thought fitter for Bedlam than civil conversation. […] And if this be a weakness to which all men are so liable, if this be a taint which so universally infects mankind, the greater care should be taken to lay it open under its due name, thereby to excite the greater care in its prevention and cure (Book II, 33, 4).

Unsurprisingly then, Swift's Tub is infected by exactly such a "taint" and "weakness," and intends to "lay open" the character of madness "to which all men are so liable," however reluctant to provide "prevention and cure." Tubbian insanity expresses a basic and fascinating characteristic of the *Tale* linked with the image of the Tub: the Tub's deceptive circular extremism and self-sufficiency. In his "Digression Concerning Madness," the Hack describes the Tubbian radicalism of mind:

> AND, whereas the mind of Man, when he gives the Spur and Bridle to his Thoughts, doth never stop, but naturally sallies out into both extreams of High and Low, of Good and Evil; His first Flight of Fancy, commonly transports Him to Idea's of what is most Perfect, finished, and exalted; till having soared out of his own Reach and Sight, not well perceiving how near the Frontiers of Height and Depth, border upon each other; With the same Course and Wing, he falls down plum into the lowest Bottom of Things; like

> one who travels the *East* into the *West*; or like a strait Line drawn by its own Length into a Circle. (*Tale* 157/8)

According to this passage, fanatic, frenzied human imagination has an innate tendency to extremism. In addition, such extremism leads to polarisation and, in a final step, union of the extremes. Again, we find the circular movement of the Tub: Since the eager human mind is unable to see "how near the Frontiers of Height and Depth border upon each other," its extremism is circular: an extreme position once taken up will turn upon itself and move towards its opposite. In a state of excessive enthusiasm, there is thus a "circling convergence of opposites" (Palmieri 1985,161). This is what Brown terms "the "demonic energy with which Swift pursues his vision," in which extremist opposition finally "arrives at the notion of the unity of those opposites of all opposites, God and the Devil" (625). Such a conclusion drawn from Swift's neat description of the nature of extremism above shows the huge destructive potential inherent in Swiftian argumentative experimenting here. The danger of drawing Swift's argument to such theological extremes, even if it were to attack the fanaticism of Modernity or Dissent, is immense.

According to the passage, the fanatic's extremes or polarized positions, although seemingly clear opposites, are based on the same ground, they are reached "[w]ith the same Course and Wing;" and this corroborates the possibility of such conclusions as the union of Brown's "opposites of all opposites." However, Swift would insist that his argument applies to (religious) extremism only, transgression he is bound to criticise and attack throughout his *Tale*. Swift insists that the human ambition to purge any idea of its relative value runs a great risk of taking it to its extreme instead and thus heightening its similarities with other deceived extreme positions (Palmieri 1985, 162).

Madness is associated throughout the *Tale* with the usurpation of reason, thus objective judgement, as well as basic humanity, compassion and kindness by intellectual pride, unregulated fancy and zeal. This is expressed in the perverse vision of the body conquering the mind. Swift's *Tale* tellingly expresses the relation between radical imagination and insanity. It vividly depicts what happens when "Imagination is at Cuffs with the Senses, and common Understanding, as well as common Sense, is Kickt out of Doors" (*Tale* 171). Yet, as has been shown, Swift wields his devastating argumentative weapon at the price of potentially universal destruction, and hence ought not to be surprised at fierce censure, repulsion and fear generated by his work, as Ehrenpreis notes:

> The remarkable violence of Swift's irony is not only due to his "polarized" imagery and to his playing foul against fair with the human body, but also to what might be called his nettle-grasping instinct. […] In the holiest places he could affect to sound coarse – not out of irreverence but as demonstration that his faith was too serene for any such expressions to impugn it. What he fails to anticipate is that other worshippers may hear the coarseness without appreciating the piety. (I 209)

Does Swift in fact in such a way fail to anticipate his readers' reactions?

In this context, let us now turn to one of Swift's "holiest places" in the *Tale*: Martin. Swift's picture of the nature of extremism becomes especially evident in the *Tale*'s religious allegory of the three brothers, Peter, Martin and Jack. These three stand, as is commonly agreed, for the Pope or Catholicism in general, Anglicanism and Dissent. Their quarrel is about the correct interpretation of their father's will, thus Revelation as expressed in the Holy Bible. This controversy, after Martin's more or less elegant withdrawal, turns out, as zealous imagination does in the passage above, to express a binary, dialectical conflict between two opposing extremes. Jack's stubborn reduction of all truth to the actual size of his father's will, and Peter's narrow focus on his own unscrupulously subjective, corrupted additions to it. Thus, the two Swiftian characters express, in the case of Jack, the Protestant stance that true meaning was to be found in Scripture alone, and in the case of Peter, the perspective of Catholic doctrine implying that Scripture alone was not conclusive and had to be completed with reflections and norms that originated in the interpretative tradition of the Apostolic Church.

This conflict of religious interpretation is echoed by various hack arguments. As Palmieri puts it, Swift's satire attacks equally "literal interpreters of the divine will" and its "allegorizers" (1985, 155). Thus Peter runs mad with pride. His brain "*shook* it self, and began to *turn round* for a little Ease [...] In short, what with Pride, Projects, and Knavery, poor *Peter* was grown distracted" (*Tale* 114). He begins to "look big, and to take mightily upon him" (*Tale* 105), and his mind is full of "the strangest Imaginations in the World" (*Tale* 115) that make him add several improvements, such as fancy shoulder-knots, to his father's original coat. In his megalomania he has his brothers call him first "My Lord PETER" (*Tale* 105) and later, even "*God Almighty*, and sometimes *Monarch of the Universe*" (*Tale* 115). Closely resembling the spiritual practices showing "*Lord Peter*'s Conceit" (*Tale* 117) Jack also runs "mad with Spleen, and Spight, and Contradiction" after his quarrel with Peter and later Martin, and he falls "into the oddest Whimsies that ever a sick Brain conceived" (*Tale* 141). Jack often walks with his eyes closed, as "*the Eyes of the Understanding see best, when those of the Senses are out of the way*" (*Tale* 193). Jack is obsessed with the interpretation of his father's will, and begins "to entertain a Fancy, that the Matter was *deeper* and *darker*, and therefore must needs have a great deal more of Mystery at the Bottom" (*Tale* 190). It is Jack's "first Revolutions of [the] Brain" (*Tale* 189) that give rise to "the most Illustrious and Epidemick Sect of *Aeolists*" (*Tale* 142) already mentioned.[44] As this description of Peter's and Jack's madness already suggests, the two religious zealots resemble each other very much. They are equally wrong in their radicalism, despite their seemingly totally opposite stances. Tubbian logic makes them peculiarly alike:

> IT was highly worth observing, the singular Effects of that Aversion, or Antipathy, which *Jack* and his Brother *Peter*

[44] As Kiernan points out, by making the Aeolists a combination of fanatic Dissenters and Paracelsians, Swift's *Tale* aims to expose the shared madness of both (715).

> seemed, even to an Affectation, to bear toward each other [...] Yet after all this, it was their perpetual Fortune to meet. The Reason of which, is easy enough to apprehend: For, the Phrenzy and the Spleen of both, having the same Foundation, we may look upon them as two Pair of Compasses, equally extended, and the fixed Foot of each, remaining in the same Center; which, tho' moving contrary Ways at first, will be sure to encounter somewhere or other in the Circumference. Besides, it was among the great Misfortunes of *Jack*, to bear a huge *Personal* Resemblance with his Brother *Peter*. Their Humours and Dispositions were not only the same, but there was a close Analogy in their Shape, their Size, and their Mien. (*Tale* 198/9)

Again, Swift shows extremist Tubbian circularity at work. Satiric extremism, like the tub-trap itself, has spherical form. This is a graphic feature of much in Swift's satire. Thus the "Phrenzy and the Spleen" of Peter and Jack have "the same Foundation," which contrary to their intention constantly makes them "encounter [each other] somewhere or other in the Circumference" of their shared fanaticism. The difference Peter and Jack are striving to establish between each other is far less significant than their "huge *Personal* Resemblance." As Levine states, "in Swift's *Tale*, the focus shifts from the text to the appendage, from the presumed center to the periphery" (1966, 222). This is also exactly the case with Peter and Jack. The two unfortunate bigots simply cannot avoid meeting, for they are both moving at an equally great distance from a moderate centre (or *via media*?) which their systems both lack, one which in the most literal sense is not there. Swift is in accord here with many members of Anglicanism who were used to treating "Dissent and Rome as the dual faces of a common foe" (Oakleaf 2003, 38). Still, in the Tubbian world, there is nothing but mad circular extremism and neurosis. Instead of a centre, there is a void, the inner vacuum or emptiness of the Tub, indeed not offering much for the reader to endorse.

False extremism is linked with self-centredness. Peter and Jack are equally egocentric. In fact, there is no other point of reference for each of them than their personal bigotry. Like the goddess in *The Battle of the Books* – "Her Eyes turned inward, as if she lookt only upon herself" (240)– and indeed like the Hack and the *Tale* as a whole, the two monomaniacs are incurably self-absorbed and narcissistic. The same obviously applies to self-centredness in religion and questions of faith in general, all of which share the circumstance that believers may reach a point where reason stops and faith begins, a fact not to be questioned from outside the realm of belief. In this sense, Jack's and Peter's imaginative extremism is in fact completely self-referential. Both deny any perspectives other than their own, and, as Peter's stubborn and despotic narrow-mindedness demonstrates, such an attitude exhibits perverse subjectivity that seeks to impose itself upon others:

> HOWEVER, it is certain, that *Lord Peter*, even in his lucid Intervals, was […] extream wilful and positive, and would at any time rather argue to Death, than allow himself to be once in an Error. Besides, he had an abominable Faculty of telling huge palpable *Lies* upon all Occasions, and swearing, not only to the Truth, but cursing the whole Company to Hell, if they pretended to make the least Scruple of believing Him. (*Tale* 119/20)

This is aggression not only to be found in "Lord Peter" but in Swift's satiric writing in general, where false absolutes reign and are intended to baffle, shock, and impose themselves on the unwary reader. Swift directs the reader's attention to the error of extremists who are convinced that the weight of an opinion lies in the force with which it is maintained. Such a conviction is reflexive: it locates authority solely within its own realms and claims universal truth and applicability. Apart from the obvious satirical attack on Catholic notions such as the Pope's infallibility or the practice of excommunication, the monstrous egotism displayed in this passage is in accordance with what DePorte describes as "the ultimate solipsism of the Moderns", an egocentrism that is "the impulse behind the Hack's frenzied wit, and by inference behind all false wit" (1974, 76).

As has been pointed out, Tubbian extremism is not restricted to exclusively spiritual or imaginative realms. Swift does not attack fanatic imagination in order to endorse the confidence of reason. Rather, it is both zealous visionary idealism *and* the use of merely instrumental reason, expressed for instance in the Aeolist pseudo-syllogism on wind (*Tale* 153), that create the bulk of the *Tale*'s irrational projects, paradoxical equations, speculations and endless systems (Schmidt 1977, 99). Peter is described as "more *Book-learned* than the other two" (*Tale* 83), a "*Projector* and *Virtuoso*" who is responsible for "many famous Discoveries, Projects and Machines" much in vogue "at present in the World" (*Tale* 105). It is precisely Peter's talent for scientific and scholarly reasoning which makes him feel superior to his brothers and which enables him to manipulate madly everything in any way related to his father's coat. As DePorte argues (1974, 177/8), to reduce Peter and Jack to Popery and Dissent would in this sense be a simplification (one that "W. Wotton" helped establish). It may be better to understand Peter as standing for forceful perversion of reason and Jack as representing an entire rejection of reason for the sake of the delirium of his "inner light." Madness, and, in a related sense, satirical anger in the *Tale* cannot be related merely to excessive and uncontrolled imagination, but more generally to private, idiosyncratic, and perversely subjective extremism, coupled with the ambition to gain power over others.

However, and paradoxically, this is also the mechanism in Swift's satiric traps. This feature becomes evident in such attitudes as the Hack's almost despotic request that his readers should imitate the conditions under which he wrote the *Tale* in order to be able to understand its most recondite schemes:

> Whatever Reader desires to have a thorough Comprehension of an Author's Thoughts, cannot take a better Method, than by putting himself into the Circumstances and Postures of Life, that the Writer was in, upon every important Passage as it flow'd from his Pen; For this will introduce a Parity and strict Correspondence of Idea's between the Reader and the Author. (*Tale* 44)

It is precisely this ambition, lacking the Hack's self-congratulatory politeness, to achieve "a parity and strict Correspondence" and thus to bring over others to one's own subjective and extremist ways of thinking that characterizes the two religious zealots. It is also a feature of the "three Ladies" and the brothers' future wives, the "*Dutchess d' Argent*, *Madame de Grands Titres*, and the *Countess d' Orgueil*." (*Tale* 74) As the notorious Grub-Street publisher Edmund Curll kindly tells us in his *Complete Key to the Tale of a Tub* (1710), the ladies the brothers fall in love with may be considered to "allude to the Vices of *Couvetousness*, *Ambition*, and *Pride*." (6) In accordance with other Tubbian fools, these ladies "were at the very Top of the Fashion, and abhorred all that were below it, but the breadth of a Hair" (*Tale* 81).

The system of excessive zeal and subjectivity which Jack and Peter as well as the Hack and other Tubbian extremists all represent is absolutely totalitarian. Like the Tub, it is spherical or self-enclosing because it allows no possibilities other than extremism and extravagance. Subjective obsession and despotism are prevalent throughout the *Tale*, hence the attitudes of those Tubbian "Philosophers and great Clerks" (*Tale* 57) who are grown fond of some

> proper mystical Number, which their Imaginations have rendred Sacred, to a Degree, that they force common Reason to find room for it in every part of Nature; reducing, including, and adjusting every *Genus* and *Species* within that Compass, by coupling some against their Wills, and banishing others at any Rate. (*Tale* 57)

Summarizing, such zealous "reducing, including, and adjusting" everything to one's own "Compass" or way of thinking forms the common denominator of all Tubbian maniacs. To force everything into the shape of one's own perspective and violently to impose one's *personal* beliefs and systems on as many people and objects as possible is the essence of madness exposed in Swift's *Tale*.[45]

Moreover, as the Hack lets us know, "Of this kind were *Epicurus*, *Diogenes*, *Apollonius*, *Lucretius*, *Paracelsus*, *Des Cartes*, and others" (*Tale* 166). This is an attack on such different branches of philosophy and science that it is indeed hard not to conclude that it is meant to be universal. It is interesting to

[45] The exact opposite of such madness forms one of the *Tale*'s very few directly expressed positive statements: "[T]he Brain, in its natural Position [...] disposeth its Owner to pass his Life in the common Forms, without any Thought of subdoing Multitudes to his own *Power*, his *Reasons* or his *Visions*" (171).

note that Swift includes in this specific attack both Paracelsus and Descartes; Newton may easily be found among the "others." As Kiernan argues, Swift's satire on science throughout his work attacks two extreme schools, namely Newtonian and Cartesian mechanical science and the organistic "life science tradition" of scholars such as notably Paracelsus (713). In his satirical exposure of what he holds scholarly aberrations, Swift attacks Tubbian monomania and perverse subjectivity and through satirical hyperbole depicts it as the main symptom of Modern pride and madness:

> For, what Man in the natural State, or Course of Thinking, did ever conceive it in his Power, to reduce the Notions of all Mankind, exactly to the same Length, and Breadth, and Heighth of his own? Yet this is the first humble and civil Design of all Innovators in the Empire of Reason.
> (*Tale* 166/7)

In this sense, and as Kiernan points out, new scientific systems such as Newtonian astronomy, which deals with absolute definitions and units of measurement such as space and time, are of course included in Swift's attack on pride and presumption. (720) For Swift's satire suggests that such absolutes are unattainable, even non-existent, in all merely human "*Systems* and *Abstracts*" (*Tale* 145). Everything in the *Tale*'s Tub moves on a shared, circular, extremist ground, a "Circumference" that excludes all other kinds of movement. Thus, Swift's strategic Tub is "both the container and the thing contained" in the same way as the Hack-*persona* functions as the "object of satire and the satirist, the ironist and the object of irony" (Traugott 1992, 165). Paradoxically, the same applies to Swiftian satire in general. Swift's satiric spotlight is directed solely on whatever angers the satirist. Thus, focal range is extremely narrow and denies existence to any other value. The *Tale*'s feature of self-centredness, combined with bipolar extremism and circularity, accounts for interpretative confusion and documents its Tubbian predicament as extraordinarily devised bait and trap. It yields a telling model and image of satire in Swift.

Vexatious Experience: Fool or Knave?

> Thy praise, or dispraise is to me alike,
> One doth not stroke me, nor the other strike.[46]

The Hack's constant shifts and internal contradictions contribute to his treatise being kinetic rather than static. There is abundant evidence for Swift's elaborate trap's being a strategic decoy and bait that, to return to Vieth's initial definition, is "significant for what it does, not for what it means." The slipperiness of the Hack's lunatic treatise makes it rather difficult for the reader to discover any reliable viewpoint in it at all, let alone Swift's. Nonetheless, the *Tale*'s perplexing maze is well calculated, for the reader is in fact tempted to participate. At one point, the learned author adroitly lets us know that

> *Satyr* being levelled at all, is never resented for an offence by any, since every individual Person makes bold to understand it of others, and very wisely removes his particular Part of the Burthen upon the shoulders of the World, which are broad enough, and able to bear it. (*Tale* 51)

Due to this innate skill at shirking criticism, satire becomes "a *Ball* bandied to and fro, and every Man carries a *Racket* about Him to strike it from himself among the rest of the Company" (*Tale* 52). Yet it is especially true of Swift that those who consider themselves totally unaffected by his satire ought not to allow themselves a false sense of security. For Swift, in employing the technique of reader entrapment, is fully determined to avoid the futility of the Emperor of Lilliput's incomprehensible, inaudible and lengthy address before Gulliver, who, recently captured and tied up, is in no fit state to receive it.[47]

The *Tale* is indeed likely to disturb, entrap, and shock the complacency of its readers. As early in the text as the Apology, we find as a foretaste of what is to come a modest instance of a conspicuous Swiftian trap, predicated on an inescapable circularity of thought: since "*Men of Wit and Tast* [...] *have been all of his* side" (*Tale* 20) we necessarily lack "*Wit and Tast*" if we object to the *Tale*. On the other hand, to approve uncompromisingly of the *Tale* means to accept its notions and style and thus to participate in its Modern madness. Such irony, as the preface announcement remarks, runs "*through the Thread of the whole Book, which the Men of Tast will observe and distinguish, and which will render some Objections that have been made, very weak and insignificant*" (*Tale* 8). Without falling for the author's complacent and ironic assurance that there is no objectionable material in his Tub, Swift's technique of irony and reader entrapment may, in the sense in

[46] Jonson, Ben. "To Foole, or Knave." *Ben Jonson's Entire Works*. Vol. VIII. Eds. Herford, C. H. and Percy Simpson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947, p. 46.

[47] "[...] one of them, who seemed to be a Person of Quality, made me a long Speech, whereof I understood not one Syllable" (*GT* 6/7).

this passage, suggest that at least some of the objections made of his *Tale* could be insignificant in that they merely touch the surface of the *Tale*'s Tub and not the underlying structure of circularity and double-edged irony.

Extremism plays a very important role in the *Tale*'s circularity, as the Hack steadfastly demonstrates. In spite of the chronic laxness of his arguments, once having occupied a position the Hack fervently and fanatically tries to defend it, which finally results in self-contradiction, puzzlement, and entrapment. This mad undiscriminating extremism is cleverly described in the notorious "Fool among Knaves" passage in the Digression Concerning Madness, where the author happily praises superficiality:

> He that can with *Epicurus* content his Ideas with the *Films* and *Images* that fly off upon his Senses from the *Superficies* of Things; Such a Man truly wise, creams off Nature, leaving the Sower and the Dregs, for Philosophy and Reason to lap up. This is the sublime and refined Point of Felicity, called *the Possession of being well deceived*; The Serene Peaceful State of being a Fool among Knaves. (*Tale* 174)

Fools and knaves proverbially go together. Balancing one another in a variety of traditional sayings, the fool/knave pair was a familiar source of ready ironies for the witty phrase-maker. Swift's jest tends towards the most universalizing of fool-knave proverbs: "Knaves and fools divide the world" (Rawson 1995, 37). In addition, this paragraph demonstrates what has already been shown with regard to the Hack's arguments: they are ironically subject to attack from within, or they are driven by paradox. That the Hack-author in his literary aspirations wanders in the fields of error and madness has been amply demonstrated. The Hack's tale expresses a general preference for imaginative illusion and passion over reality and reason. It does not come as a surprise then that the passage cited above, like the argument about the flayed woman and the beau's carcass, is intended to demonstrate the superiority of superficiality.

Yet, once again, the passage turns upon itself and ironically undermines its own positive statement. Hence a person that "content[s] his Ideas with the *Films* and *Images* that fly off upon his Senses from the *Superficies* of Things" is a fool. However, unlike the passages already discussed, this paragraph directly combines assaults on both positions, thus taking the author's lack of consistency to a nervous climax. Whoever is not a fool is – a knave. The Hack appears to have created a genuine impasse. The reader finds himself on the horns of the Hack's dilemma and may at first be stuck with it, for there seems to be no escape from this fix. In other words, this kind of dilemma is a basic constituent of reader entrapment in Swift. As has been demonstrated with regards to the Hack-author's zealous praise of inconsistent attitudes, there is a general paradoxical trait in the *Tale*, a self-contradiction or turning upon itself that generates a circular Tubbian movement. In his fool/knave dichotomy, the Hack presents "an antithesis and the negative of that antithesis – a dialectic without synthesis" (Palmieri 1985, 153). Swift's double-edged irony is

paradoxical. It provokes a nervous oscillation in the reader between identification and rejection, with the satirical norm constantly shifting. The Hack's mad extremes, linked with the pseudo-distinctions he makes between insides and outsides, fools and knaves, are equally unfavourable. The reader is caught in a pickle when trying to decide which of the mad opposites he would rather choose. The Swiftian comment that a "*Man who receives a Buffet in the Dark may be allowed to be vexed*" (*Tale* 16) is thus given new meaning.

In this context, it may not be totally amiss to recall a passage from one of the literary models that Swift utilized for the composition of his Tubbian satire. As Ehrenpreis states, "To Erasmus […] may be traced, ultimately, Swift's inverted *decorum personae*, his acting the dunce (here and elsewhere) because he is exposing fools" (I 222). Desiderius Erasmus was a writer highly prized by Swift (Parnell 221), and his *Praise of Folly* (*Moriae Encomium*, 1511) is considered a direct source for Swift's *Tale* (Wood 1986, 46). Just how close Swift's Hack comes to Erasmus' Folly is demonstrated by the following counterpart to the "Fool among Knaves" passage: Folly asserts that

> to be deceived, they say, is miserable. Quite the contrary – not to be deceived is most miserable of all. For nothing could be further from the truth than the notion that man's happiness resides in things as they actually are. It depends on opinions. For human affairs are so manifold and obscure that nothing can be clearly known, as is rightly taught by my friends the Academics, the least arrogant of philosophers. Or, if anything can be known, it often detracts from the pleasures of life. Finally, the human mind is so constituted that it is far more taken with appearances than reality. If anyone wants clear and obvious evidence of this fact, he should go to church during sermons: if the preacher is explaining his subject seriously, they all doze, yawn, and are sick of it. But if that [...] preacher [...] tells some old wife's tale, as they often do, the whole congregation sits up and listens with open mouths. (71)

Of course, Swift exposes such advice of Folly as deceitful in his "Letter to a Young Gentleman," where he argues as follows,

> A PLAIN convincing Reason may possibly operate upon the Mind both of a learned and ignorant Hearer, as long as they live; and will edify a Thousand Times more than the Art of wetting the Handkerchiefs of a whole Congregation, if you were to attain it.
> IF your Arguments be strong, in God's Name offer them in as moving a Manner as the Nature of the Subject will properly admit; wherein Reason, and good Advice will be your safest Guides: But beware of letting the pathetick Part swallow up the rational: For, I suppose, *Philosophers*

> have long agreed, that Passions should never prevail over Reason. (*PW* IX 70)

Consider all those readers of Swift, including the present author, who take pleasure in trying to cope with the Hack's Tubbian traps and who consider Swift's literary talents to be much better exhibited in his extravagant satirical passages than in his solemn and composed sermons. Would Folly's speech not place them in exactly such a congregation at church, yawning over serious subjects but listening "with open mouths" to "some old wife's tale"?[48] Swift's positive response in his ecclesiastical writings is quite clear: reason must reign over the passions. However, the very same author who advises thus in his function as a preacher makes the Hack in his satiric writings create such an ironically admirable *oeuvre* as nearly to lead folly's advice to triumph. Given the fascination and abhorrence engendered by the *Tale*, does Swift not in fact ironically demonstrate that the human mind "is far more taken with appearances than reality"? And is such a claim not precisely an inherent constituent of the *Tale*'s Tubbian structure, its status as decoy and trap in one? I think this is a feature at the very core of satire in Swift. In Swift's own terms: knave who does not believe it.

[48] In addition, it may be restated that an "old wife's tale" was quite synonymous with a "tale of a tub" in contemporary use.

Reader Entrapment and Swift's Double-Edged Irony

As Knox suggests, irony may in its broadest terms be described as the comic tension between two meanings: appearance and reality, the direct ironic claim and the indirectly deducible truth:

> Irony may be defined as the conflict of two meanings which has a dramatic structure peculiar to itself: initially, one meaning, the *appearance*, presents itself as the obvious truth, but when the context of this meaning unfolds, in depth or in time, it surprisingly discloses a conflicting meaning, the *reality*, measured against which the first meaning now seems false or limited [...]. (1973, 626)

The Hack's entire argument about dualities, such as outsides and insides, credulity or curiosity, fiction or truth, fool or knave, deals with a basic problem of interpretation associated with the ironic relationship of appearance and reality. It poses the question concerning figurative discourse (which is also a fundamental part of the *Tale*'s religious allegory) as to whether it is better, in order to find reality and truth, to interpret a text literally or figuratively, to remain on the surface of a word, or to seek deeper meanings within it.

The Hack is caught up in this conflict between outside and inside and generally revealed to be pitifully restricted to the former. Consequently, this puts him on the side of appearance, thus placing him in the typical satirical situation of exposure and ridicule. Yet Swiftian irony is not as simple. Considering a passage like "Wisdom is a Fox" or the "Fool among Knaves" sequence, there is also something wrong with the reality or inside part of Swift's satire. Insides are generally shown to be empty, painful, or corrupt. In the Tubbian world, insides (referring to reality in our definition of irony) are equally as erroneous as outsides (that is, deceitful ironic appearances). Generally speaking, irony brings the two meanings into open conflict, but "by encompassing this conflict in a single structure," and with the reader's engagement, "resolves it into harmony or unity" (Knox 1973, 627).

Nevertheless, this does not apply to Swift's irony. Irony in *A Tale of a Tub* does not have a single-structure. It is circular and has not one, but two edges. In order to turn the Hack's parodic discourse into satire the reader must convert ironies into singular statements, "and ironies (particularly the Swiftian variety) show a stubborn tendency to retain their openness" (Phiddian 2). The Tubbian prototype of entrapment closely resembles other notorious dilemmas or traps in Swift. In Tubbian figurative discourse, both ironic poles, the Hack's superficiality (i.e. the signifier or appearance) and his profundity (i.e. the signified or reality) are exposed to ridicule. Swiftian satire places opposite (binary) viewpoints side by side without either subscribing to one of them or synthesising both. The "Fool among Knaves" passage cannot be understood as simple irony (for instance by reversing the author's statements and

favouring their opposites), for if "we interpret this paragraph by adopting that which the narrator rejects, we avoid folly, but convict ourselves of knavery" (Nash 425). Thus, whatever interpretation is chosen will rebound upon the reader and undermine his/her own stance.

The Tub's circularity is perfect, or as Traugott points out: "How can the twaddle of a hireling author, a critic, a pope, a saint, a king, a philosopher, a Bedlamite be inverted to find non-twaddle? How can nothingness be inverted?" (1992, 163). Swift's satire makes the strategic negativity of irony very clear, which says what it does not believe and thus cannot itself provide a positive. As Traugott again remarks, "irony given its head is infinite negativity to the edge of the void." He concludes that the "trope has, so to speak, a vocation for nothingness" (1992, 162/3). Even if taking into account that it always takes the reader to find the positive opposites in Swift's ironies, this is problematic: none of the false dichotomies that Swift's *Tale* is so fond of furnishing can establish a perspective which is not itself undercut by irony. This is genuine Swiftian entrapment. At this point the reader is forced into play and he is understandably at pains to find a way out, for there seems to be none.

The Hack's entire narrative is based on a binary pattern of opposing extremes. Swift's rhetorical manoeuvres place the Hack's readers in the Tubbian predicament of having to choose between unacceptable alternatives, corrupted insides or outsides, foolish superficiality or knavish profundity, Peter or Jack. In giving the *Tale* its Tubbian structure, Swift thus plays with the dialectical problematic of an excluded middle. This constitutes a hard test of the reader's faculty of discrimination and understanding. In *New Organon* (1620), Francis Bacon stated that "The understanding must not therefore be supplied with wings, but rather hung with weights, to keep it from leaping and flying. Now this has never yet been done; when it is done, we may entertain better hopes of the sciences" (I; 104; 97). The Hack's version tellingly addresses this problem:

> Whether a Tincture of Malice in our Natures, makes us fond of furnishing every bright Idea with its Reverse; Or, whether Reason reflecting upon the Sum of Things, can, like the Sun, serve only to enlighten one half of the Globe, leaving the other half, by Necessity, under Shade and Darkness: or whether Fancy, flying up to the imagination of what is Highest and Best, becomes over-shot, and spent, and weary, and suddenly falls like a dead Bird of Paradise, to the Ground. (*Tale* 158)

Unsurprisingly, this passage is sceptical of Baconian "hopes of the sciences." In the Hack's world, all understanding is "supplied with wings" of the Tubbian sort, given to mad "leaping and flying," and Swift entirely leaves the job to the reader to have his/her understanding "hung with weights." Moreover, begging the question about the character of such weights we meet with Swift's complete silence. Is it empirical observation and contemplation, or focus on usefulness, as Bacon would have it? There is no such thing in the Tub. The tension in the *Tale* between mad extremes, founded on a Swiftian "Tincture of

Malice," consists of a use of binary conflicts which constitutes the basic strategy of dialectics.[49] The dialectic consists of an either-or structure, the offering of two alternatives, "so that the division exhausts the genus which is the subject of the question" (Rembert 132). Dialectical questioning excludes a middle and thus forces its victim to choose between two more or less unacceptable extremes. It is consequently "suggestive of the formal dilemma because it can almost by necessity put an opponent in a bad light" (Rembert 161). In this sense, the Tubbian fate of the "Bird of Paradise" mentioned in the passage above appears inevitable.

However, with regard to the "Fool among Knaves" dilemma mentioned above, the problem is that the Hack has ensnared the reader in such a way, indeed whether superficiality or profundity is preferable, that he may at first be unaware of the fact that the author's madness does not consist in his preference for credulity rather than for curiosity, but in his assumption that all credulous or superficial people are fools and all curious or profound people are knaves: these two alternatives evidently do not represent the whole range of possibilities. Swift "has left his opponents only alternatives which are distasteful to them" (Rembert 138). In this instance the opponents in the dialectic are Swift and the *Tale*'s readers, which recalls Dyson's well-known assessment that "[a] state of tension, not to say war, exists between Swift and his readers" (56) and that this warlike tension constitutes "a battle of wits" (66) between author and reader. Despite the sheer abundance of error that the Hack furnishes in his treatise, readers are forced to find and form their own judgement, and necessarily look for Swift's authorial intentions behind the madness of the *Tale*. Thus Swift's seeming absence in the *Tale* paradoxically points all the more strongly to the need to identify his presence (Francus 50). In an attempt to stabilize the text, the reader is required to pit his/her wits against Swift. This tension is tellingly expressed at one point by the Hack, when he describes his readers, whose curiosity is constantly fed with authorial hints, enigmas, and dilemmas, as "his Prisoners as close as he pleases, till Weariness or Dullness force him to let go his Gripe" (*Tale* 203).

The Hack madly creates two misleading poles in taking all possibilities to seemingly opposing extremes, and in claiming these false extremes to be the only available choice he entraps the reader. However, it becomes clear that in order to evade Swift's pseudo-dilemma of fool or knave, one may take it by the horns or escape between the horns;[50] in this pseudo-dilemma neither consequence of the major premise follows from its antecedent (a person contented with superficial impressions does not necessarily have to be a fool, and it is obviously not true that the realms of "Philosophy and Reason" are merely populated by knaves); nor is the minor premise, the disjunction offering

[49] That dialectics forms an inherent structural part of Swift's Tubbian *Tale* may also be seen as an aspect of its paradoxical character. Like the false Aeolist syllogism that demonstrates how error may spring from "logical" reasoning, dialectics may in a similar way be employed to win an argument, whether rightly or wrongly. Hence, Swift in the *Tale* uses the very same rhetorical means and intellectual strategies that he ironically condemns.

[50] The notion of the "horns" of a dilemma derives from the sixteenth/seventeenth-century definition of the dilemma as *cornutus syllogismus*, i.e. a 'horned' syllogism. As Rembert notes, dilemmas may generally be evaded in three ways: "by going between the 'horns', by grasping the horns or by rebutting with a counter-dilemma" (135).

the unpleasant choices between being a fool or knave, complete: there are obviously more alternatives than those offered. The Hack's reductive vision in the "Fool Among Knaves" paragraph confuses the natural outside of things with the surface of his own falsely decorated tropes in the same way as he confounds realism or the search for truth with the obnoxious insides of his own figurative discourse. Thus, to descry the deceit as well as the boundaries of the false binary options which the Hack offers is to escape his trap; to draw distinctions is to evade the Tub's entrapment and thus avoid the fallacies of an enthusiastic argument.

Even if Swift has equipped his elaborately prepared trap with an emergency exit, the experience the reader has to undergo is still rather unpleasant. As DePorte points out, in "ridiculing the excesses of fancy Swift was attacking not stupidity, but abuse of intellect, not loss of the power to think, but loss of the power to discriminate between appropriate thoughts and inappropriate thoughts, wise perceptions and specious ones" (1974, 77). The reader must find reality outside the confinement of the Tub, thus formulate his own judgement on the Hack's various dilemmas. In the *Tale*, Swiftian irony and dialectical questioning constitute a test of the discriminatory faculties, prompting the *Tale*'s readers to constitute their own standard in order to think their way out. To engage its readers in such interpretative struggles is the *Tale*'s particular objective and again reminds us of its strategic function as a decoy, that is, Swift's intention "to fling" the reader "out an empty *Tub*, by way of Amusement, to divert him from laying violent Hands upon the Ship" (*Tale* 40).

Swift's Paradoxical Tub: the Trap and Its Innate Subversiveness

> The Tale of the Tub was acted on tusday night at Court, the 14 Janua. 1633, by the Queens players, and not likte.[51]

In the *Tale*'s lampooning of "*the Follies of Fanaticism and Superstition*" (*Tale* 5), all notions and ideas, when taken to extremes, are alike in their madness. They revolve on a common extreme foundation. Radical opposition to any kind of extremism is accordingly paradoxical. Its self-contradiction lies in an increasing resemblance to the fanatic notions it seeks to attack. Critical hostility of this sort blurs the convictions that spurred it. This is evidently not only true of the opposing bigots Peter and Jack in the *Tale*'s religious allegory and the Hack's mad treatment of fools and knaves but also of the *Tale* as a whole, which in extreme fashion attacks extremists and extremes.

The hyperbolic exposure of "*Abuses and Corruptions in Learning and Religion*" (*Tale* 12) is the basic goal of Swift's satire, which accounts for the fact that the *Tale* itself is generically extreme. Swift's satire shares the extremist nature of the corruptions it aims at exposing, and the *Tale*'s rhetoric is consequently always in danger of undermining the positive values it seeks to preserve. Thus, Swift's *Tale* itself risks weakening the boundaries on which it encroaches: it "employs and identifies textual and cultural subversiveness, and it can easily become subversive of itself" (Phiddian 3). Swift's thorough immersion in the Hack's mad schemes and systems demonstrates the *Tale*'s dangerous strategy, dangerous because it is at least, in potential, universally subversive. It is, in this sense, "almost fair" to think of the *Tale* as "the greatest of all the bad books it mocks, in the real, not just the mock-sense" (Rawson 1983, 58). This may be called Swift's ultimate achievement.

Reading the *Tale*, it becomes indeed quite obvious that Swift's imagination and creativity was very much captured by the schemes of Modern experimental science, even if this happened in a satirically negative way. As Phiddian notes, "Modernism's many mechanisms are not simply exposed to ridicule: the book is in many ways a masterpiece of Modernity" (147). What can at best be taken as a hidden norm in Swift's satire is some form of common sense which Swift's erroneous *persona*e have completely left behind. Yet, common sense is a very vague term: it depends very much on context; for what seems absolutely unreasonable or useless today may be perfectly commonsense in the future. In other words, common sense is not a very convenient standard to measure natural science by, one of Swift's most favourite satiric targets.

In his study on Swift's satire on science, Affentranger calls this "the spectacle of the growth of knowledge": the development of scientific experimenting and achievement often moves in a sphere outside any ideas of common sense and is thus unpredictable from the common-sensical

[51] Entry in Herbert's Office Book relating to the performance of Ben Jonson's play *A Tale of a Tub* in 1633. (quoted in Herford/Simpson 3)

viewpoint. For this reason, he is reluctant to consider Swift a prophet offering viable representations or even solutions to hermeneutic problems of modern science. Swift did not attack the work of experimental philosophers because he was able to foresee the damage and dangers this would bring to future societies, but because such experiments and schemes simply did not make the least sense to him in his society, in his personal and clerical context, in his notion of common sense. Swift, and with him many other contemporary satirists, was confident enough to damn science from such a stance. There is another Swiftian paradox here, in perfect accord with the nature of Swift's Tub as depicted above, because in his attempt to make such a claim, Swift himself becomes a victim, too:

> In a curious way Swift, the sceptic, fell into the same pit as […] enthusiastic proponents of empirical natural philosophy. They all thought they could predict the form and scope of knowledge within human reach, Swift in a negative way by pointing to the human liability to err; Wotton, Glanvill, Sprat and others by claiming complacently to have found the one and only method to attain that knowledge. (Affentranger 134)

Paradox is no less than the very nature of much in Swift's satire. In religious terms, the inherent Swiftian paradox may also reflect the irreconcilable opposition of Swift the preacher and Swift the satirist, the contradictory relation between the alleged aim and actual form of the *Tale*. Swift makes the Hack's mad arguments (and those of all other Tubbian zealots) at once brilliantly deceptive, very powerful and even enjoyable in their oddity, while his own position remains absent or meekly silent. As Melvyn New points out, "Swift the Anglican and sermon writer must assign inspired language to the centre [established faith, or common sense, that is], while Swift the satirist undercuts all such claims to inspiration. The untenable position cuts very deep indeed" (169). The *Tale* basically consists of deviations from a standard that is scarcely hinted at, while its positive values are expressed only very indirectly. This may be the main reason why the *Tale* "has been called negative and destructive intellectual activity to no end" (Williams 1958, 137).

In spite of Swift's explicit claim that his work celebrates "*the Church of England as the most perfect of all others in Discipline and Doctrine*" and "*advances no Opinion*" the Anglican clergy "*reject, nor condemns any they receive*" (*Tale* 5), it is at times difficult to accept Swift's claims of his *Tale*'s orthodoxy (which would constitute the satire's implied positive) in the face of the severe shock many devout Christians experienced, and still do, when reading it (DePorte 1974, 96). Indeed, it is at least problematic to find anything other than madness and error to be really celebrated in the *Tale*. The extra nerve and bitterness of Swiftian satire contributes to its subversiveness. As Nokes comments, the "energy released against one branch of Christian theology seems sufficient to destroy several more" (1978, 54).

The representative of the Anglican middle way, Martin, is hardly ever seen (he vanishes after Section VI), and occupies a very weak position in the

plot, which creates a clash "with the programme of the book as a whole," because it seems to be Swift's precarious aim "to imply a virtue which he desires to recommend, but to state it either not at all or ironically – by pretending to depreciate it" (Ehrenpreis I 188). Yet, considered from the angle of the Tubbian key metaphor, even this move makes sense. In the same way as an empty tub circles around some cavity, the tripolar division of the *Tale*'s religious allegory finally breaks down into bipolar opposition: "[w]ithin the allegory the eccentrics displace the moderate Martin, just as within the *Tale* the digressions usurp the allegory" (Palmieri 1985, 155).

As is frequently noted in criticism, this treatment of Martin, representing the allegedly moderate *via media* of the Church of England, does not corroborate the *Tale*'s avowed objective to defend Anglicanism. Swift's own statement, "*Religion they tell us ought not to be ridiculed, and they tell us Truth, yet surely the Corruptions in it may*" (*Tale* 7), does not provide much help in this instance, for his irony does not stop at Martin. Ehrenpreis is sceptical of such a strategy, arguing that in "seventeenth-century England it would scarcely have been feasible for a writer to communicate his love for the Established Church by the medium of mock-insults" (I 188). It must indeed be stated that the common forms that Martin subscribes to are relatively colourless when juxtaposed with the mad peculiarities of Jack and Peter; and there is a "subversive indefiniteness" (Rawson 1983, 61) in Swift's description of Martin's soothing speech to the enraged Jack:

> *MARTIN* had still proceeded as gravely as he began; and doubtless, would have delivered an admirable Lecture of Morality, which might have exceedingly contributed to my Reader's *Repose*, *both of Body and Mind*: (the true ultimate End of *Ethicks*;) but *Jack* was already gone a Flight-shot beyond his Patience. (*Tale* 139/40)

It is not easy to decide whether this comic remark on Martin's grave attempt at an "admirable Lecture" that never takes place is to be seen as a direct authorial deflation of Martin or as a mildly ironic, even affectionate (and somehow avuncular) Augustan ribbing that provides relief from the over-solemn position of the character (Rawson 1983, 60). The latter technique is not, after all, very Swiftian, let alone typical of the *Tale*'s style. Swift's treatment of Martin here is something in between: an uneasy display of an emphatic standard that ought not to look too positive in the midst of a work whose Tubbian structure and function as satirical trap denies certainty and works by blame rather than praise.

Thus, certainties or moral standards, if they exist, are to be found nowhere within the *Tale*, but have to be searched for outside of it. This is in accordance with the text's function as bait, where only madness can be met, and also indicates the direction for possible liberation from reader entrapment. The reader has to construct moral standards outside the text, he has to look for answers himself, and, if he wishes to consult the author, he may have a better chance of finding a less ambiguous or even a positive Swift in his religious writings. However, the warning may be made in advance, that

there is no easy answer to the questions and doubts Swift forces on his readers. In his "Letter to a Young Genteman," Swift makes it very clear that

> I DO not find that you are any where directed in the Canons, or Articles, to attempt explaining the Mysteries of the Christian Religion. And, indeed [...] I do not see how it can be agreeable to Pity, Orthodoxy, or good Sense, to go about such a Work. For, to me there seems to be a manifest Dilemma in the Case: If you explain them, they are Mysteries no longer; if you fail, you have laboured to no Purpose [...] Neither do I think it any Part of Prudence, to perplex the Minds of well-disposed People with Doubts, which probably would never have otherwise come into their Heads. (*PW* IX 77/78)

This is how Swift felt about religious speculation and the "Clamour against Religious Mysteries" represented by such people as for instance "those Gentlemen, you call the *Free*-Thinkers" (*PW* IX 77). However, it is clear that to "perplex the Minds of well-disposed People with Doubts" is exactly the way all of Swift's satiric writings work. Swift's Tubbian strategy indeed leads to paradox. Swift would be forced to break the entrapment pattern of his *Tale* if he represented Martin in a more distinctly positive way. What becomes clear is that Martin cannot be seen as an absolute ideal. In spite of the fact that Martin no doubt represents a positive alternative to the follies of Peter and Jack and that finding passages in the text celebrating his character as that of the Anglican Church is "not impossible" (Adams 74), the reader nevertheless recognizes that "the Despondency of *Martin*" (*Tale* 138), his "avoidance of madness[,] is not itself heroic" (Nash 419).[52] Martin's character, which is at one point described as "extremely flegmatick and sedate" (*Tale* 139), is thus too weak to express clearly the satire's implied positives.[53]

Jonathan Swift's circular play of attacks and counterattacks is yet more complex. Swift indeed seems to undercut his own centred silence quite consciously with the bitter comment on Martin's "kind of Pedantick affected Calmness" (*Tale* 140). Martin's removal may constitute a necessary tactic in order to allow Swift's *Tale* to focus on its satirical aim of exposing abuses in religion, but the paradox of Swift's ideological position, the "pathos" of the silent "centre in infinite regression from conflicting ideologies" still remains. (New 183) We are indeed reading a tale of a Tub: any more positive use of Martin would be at variance with the *Tale*'s paradoxical structure and function as a trap.

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[52] Swift offers a description of Martin that comes closest to the *Tale*'s positive values when he says that Martin "knew very well, there yet remained a great deal more to be done; however, the first Heat being over, his Violence began to cool, and he resolved to proceed more moderately in the rest of the Work" (*Tale* 136).

[53] As Dyson notes, satire "measures human conduct not against a norm but against an ideal" (2). Such implied idealism may contribute to Martin's weakness in the sense that Swift the satirist, in spite of his position as a High Church representative, could or would not consider the Anglican stand to be perfect.

Exit the Tub

> Some have at first for wits, then poets pass'd,
> Turn'd critics next, and prov'd plain fools at last.[54]

The following passage, showing the three brothers of the religious allegory interpreting their father's will, again illustrates the subversive and self-contradictory potential of Swift's satire in the *Tale*:

> This, another of the Brothers disliked, because of that Epithet, *Silver*, which could not, he humbly conceived, in Propriety of Speech be reasonably applied to a *Broom-stick*: but it was replied upon him, that this Epithet was understood in a *Mythological*, and *Allegorical* Sense. However, he objected again, why their Father should forbid them to wear a *Broom-stick* on their Coats [...]; upon which he was taken up short, as one that spoke irreverently of a *Mystery*, which doubtless was very useful and significant, but ought not to be over-curiously pryed into, or nicely reasoned upon. (*Tale* 88)

This paragraph may not only be read as a comic attack against specific abuses of religious interpretation, but also very easily as a general assault on religion and faith (as existing beyond reason). There are similarly ironic reflections elsewhere. One is the description of Jack's interpretative zeal, in terms of his "Fancy, that the Matter was *deeper* and *darker*, and therefore must needs have a great deal more of Mystery at the Bottom" (*Tale* 190). Another is expressed in the highly problematic treatment of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and Transubstantiation. One of the brothers cannot help having severe doubts when Peter offers bread for mutton: "*By G—, My Lord*,[...] *I can only say that to my Eyes, and Fingers, and Teeth, and Nose, it seems to be nothing but a Crust of Bread*" (*Tale* 118). Swift's irony in this passage is so open as to allow attacks on all religious belief. It thus makes the attack against aspects of religious practices universal. At the same time, it demonstrates the mutual exclusiveness of merely physical empiricism and religious belief, a problematic issue so frequently discussed in Swiftian satire.

Such Tubbian lines form what I have called traps. They provoke the typically nervous alternation from purely figurative to exclusively literal readings, from knave to fool, a movement, the Tub's "Rotation" (*Tale* 40), between two alternatives that are both insufficient. The consequence is reader entrapment. The threatening reality that the *Tale* envisions is the product of subjective, perverted and pseudo-logical schemes of argument, and it is indeed difficult to trace their common denominator, let alone Swift's stance, behind them. As Ehrenpreis notes, in his satiric writings, Swift

[54] Pope, Alexander. *Essay on Criticism*. (1711) *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*. Eds. John Butt et al., London: Methuen, 1939, I 36/37.

> pushes separate arguments to their extremes without regarding the inferences that persistent and learned readers might elicit from them. For those who attend closely to his writing this feature becomes an aspect of his literary self, and they come to look for it. But as a result, although [...] [satire] abounds in challenging doctrines and intense rhetoric, it would be an unrewarding task to bring them all happily together. (III 463)

In Traugott's words, Swift's irony "takes readers to the edge of nothingness and there abandons them" (1992, 173). Nonetheless, nervous oscillation may be implied by Swift as positive in the *Tale*; or, to return to Craven's remark, "The *Tale*'s *persona* initiated an era of relative truth" (15). In Swift's *Tale*, such Tubbian characters as the Hack, Peter and Jack, or fanatic groups such as the Aeolist sect, claim absolute authority in their visions and judgements of final truths. Such pretence at ultimate knowledge is the height of enthusiasm and pride, and thus constitutes in Swift's sense the essence of madness.

Yet, it seems to avoid Tubbian insanity is to bring together common sense with faith, that is, an acceptance of what is beyond human understanding. Hence, it takes the creation of a somewhat "amorphous standard" (Francus 162) in order to avoid the Hack's false collapsing dichotomies of credulity or curiosity, of fool and knave. In this understanding, Swift's comment on one of his sermons may also be taken as good advice in the Tubbian context: "One great design of my discourse was to give you warning against running into either extreme of two bad opinions" (*PW* IX 230). In the same way, readers trying to interpret the *Tale* must accept or reject the text's literal meaning "without falling into the easy codes of a strictly allegorical or a strictly ironic interpretation (Nash 431). This troublesome interpretative balancing act is one sort of *via media* and the only way that the *Tale*, however indirectly, suggests.

Francus notes that Swift's concern for watchful discrimination and judgement may not be overstated, for "throughout his works he argues that the absence of clear and correct distinctions is a sign of wilful deception, if not outright stupidity" (78). As one critic puts it, reading and interpreting Swift is "to wander usefully in the fertile fields of Error" (Phiddian 114), for this is all that Swiftian satire incorporates. Like its Tub, Swift's *Tale* is always "given to Rotation" (*Tale* 40) and turning upon itself in the same manner as "*the Follies of Fanaticism*" (*Tale* 5) it seeks to expose. And like that "large Portion of Wit," "observ'd" in the Introduction, both Swift's *Tale* and his Tub endlessly run "much upon a Line, and ever in a Circle" (*Tale* 296).

G U L L I V E R ' S
T R A V E L S.

SECTION 2

ENTRAPMENT AND THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

> His next is a great Affectation for every thing that is nasty, when he spies any Objects that another Person would avoid looking on, that he Embraces.[55]

Introduction: *Gulliver's Travels*, the *Tale*, and Entrapment

Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the World By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, And Then a Captain of Several Ships is an elaborate, sweeping attack on human pride. On the one hand, as becomes already apparent in the lengthy and somewhat ponderous full title, it constitutes a great parody of the language and terminology of popular travel literature and scientific discourse, on the other hand, its crucial aim is to satirize such thoroughly human aspects as the body, morality, philosophy and politics.[56] This already demonstrates the scope this book offers for Swift to entrap his readers; and the range of topics for readers and critics to engage their minds in is literally limitless.

The *Travels*' varied reception demonstrates the copiousness of layers of meaning and appeals they offer. The book, first published in 1726, has often been called Swift's masterpiece, even though it may be stated that it somewhat lacks the ingenious exuberance of Swift's first great satire, *A Tale of a Tub*. Yet, Swift knew about the *Travels*' volatile potential as well as he did about the *Tale*'s: he had again taken care of disguising authorship and returned to Dublin as quickly as possible after having handed in the manuscript to his printer in order to calmly await the explosion of the bomb in

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[55] King, William. *Some Remarks on the Tale of a Tub* (1704). *Swiftiana* I. London: Garland, 1975, p. 10.

[56] In "A Letter from Capt. Gulliver, to his Cousin Sympson," Swift makes a direct reference to the work of William Dampier (1652-1715), the English adventurer, pirate and extremely popular author of travel accounts, such as *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), elements and jargon of which Swift took considerable pleasure in parodying ("as my Cousin *Dampier* did by my Advice, in his Book called, *A Voyage round the World*" (*GT* 28)).
In addition, it is also notable that Daniel Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York. Mariner*, which appeared at about the time Swift began working on his travels, could have been a great source of inspiration for Swift. Hunter makes a persuasive argument that Gulliver's inconsistencies and static nature as well as the *Travels*' episodic structure, lack of narrative development and gross subjectivity make "emphatic anti-novelistic statements," thus trying to correct the vision provided by Defoe's early example of a novel with its developing main character and realism (224).

London: the book's reception by its victims as well as the general public. The volume, of course, was an immediate success and readers were instantly fascinated by its imagery, wondering about its meanings, allusions and innuendo. In some of the latter lay the reasons for the book's second, rather different reception: suspicion, resentment, disgust.

There were objections from political, philosophical and religious corners as well as angry comments about the author's misanthropy and misogyny. For instance, one pamphleteer responding to *Gulliver's Travels* claimed sarcastically that the book could not possibly have been written by an Anglican cleric and dean, for there is "not one Word of true Christianity in it, but several ludicrous and obscene Passages, which are shocking even to common Decency."[57] It was no use for Swift to veil his authorship: it had been an open secret from the start. Furthermore, the *Travels* are equally populated with Tubbian characters and schemes; thus allowing Swift to pursue satiric goals similar to those in the *Tale*.

The *Travels* show a very distinct outer structure which at first sight invites the reader to believe that the main areas of satiric attack are clearly discernible from the start. On a very basic level, Lemuel Gulliver's travels contain four parts, each of which provides Swift with an area for satiric attack. In "A Voyage to Lilliput" and "A Voyage to Brobdingnag," Swift directs the main satiric assault on the human body and proportion as well as on politics and courtly society. "A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib and Japan" criticizes natural science and intellectual speculation, whereas Gulliver's fourth "Voyage to the Country of the Houyhnhnms" offers Swift's final and most devastating vision of human (in)capacity for reason and moral values. Thus, a first glance at the book's basic structure already appears to yield the fundamental areas of Swift's satire. Needless to say, Swiftian ironies are not to be categorized quite as readily as this: Swift's satiric assault is more universal; and if Swift deals with one area, he never ceases to have the others, in more or less overt a manner, in mind, so that his strike against human error always happens on different planes simultaneously. In addition to this global sweep, and very important with regard to reader entrapment, there is still Swift's intention to disturb each of his readers individually.

The *Travels* feature the Tubbian trait of satiric attack shifting rapidly on various levels, either general or personal; and reading Gulliver's accounts thus provides the reader with a kaleidoscopic movement of satiric perspectives, intended to dazzle and deeply disturb him. What remains, as with the *Tale*, is a feeling of defamiliarization, isolation and instability for which Swift himself does not provide a cure. Parallels between the methods Swift employs in the *Tale* and the *Travels* are thus numerous: apart from various ironies in play at the same time on different levels there is also the mechanism of the unreliable narrator or satiric *persona*, the commentaries of whom the reader seems to depend on until he resolves to think for himself. Gulliver is as unreliable as the Hack, although totally different in tone, for he seems rather likable from the

[57] *Gulliver Decypher'd; Or Remarks on a late Book, intitled Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the World* (London 1727?), 3, 9, 30 (quoted in Kelly 66).

start and less obviously deranged and zealous than his predecessor. Yet his evident weaknesses and outrageous inconsistencies become increasingly clear with the number of pages. Still, Swift's intention is basically the same, and again two-fold: to force the reader to enter the mind of an unreliable fool and to rob that reader of any sense of direction, stability and reliability, thus leading him into isolation and alienation, directly into entrapment, his Tub, as it were.

In the *Travels*, Swift has prepared an outer structure of four stages, each intended to lead to and particularly add up to such alienation. These episodes are structurally extremely similar; the voyage framework is always, and almost annoyingly, the same. The frame could be described approximately so: Gulliver gives an account of some brief family information (mostly banal, apart from such telling descriptions as of Gulliver's leaving his "poor Wife big with Child," (*GT* 205) thus showing his irresponsibility); he explains his employment on a ship (which is increasingly miraculous, taking into account his disastrous record as a sailor) and the subsequent seafaring failure which brings him to an unknown shore; he mentions his amazing escape out of this realm and his return home, ending again with an account of some family information. This, of course, is an exaggeration of the monotony of the voyage framework in the *Travels*, for the voyages do provide enjoyable reading. Yet, it is important to note that in accordance with these rather monotonous frame narratives, Gulliver is unchangeable and unteachable; he does not have any capacity for keeping or improving his ways. Gulliver is far from learning from his experiences until the fourth voyage, and then his attempts at change lead to disaster. Thus, the blunt repetition of structure, format and plan forces the notion into the reader's head that Gulliver's travels do not entail development, learning from past mistakes, and thus any kind of improvement.

This again shows the Tubbian situation so typical of reader entrapment: the reader is alone, alienated from familiar contexts and surrounded by a whirl of false thoughts, false attitudes, false options: an abundance of error. There is no progress in the text but a stubborn repetition of the same or similar mistakes on various levels and the reader does not know where to start or what to think first.

A reader who has thus transcended to the core of Swift's satire, past the playful, comical and droll surface, which the parody of travel literature, memoirs, utopias, autobiographies, novels, scientific discourses, etc. provides, will no doubt notice that he is being continually attacked on various levels. The multiplicity of genres the book employs, makes its own, parodies and ridicules demonstrates the *Travels*' protean character and thus Swift's intention to baffle. Thus, the numerous commentaries on innumerable subjects in the book are telling evidence of its function as an interest-catcher, a seemingly limitless lure. There is again the Tubbian strategy of bait and trap, of the shiny, spinning Tub and the entrapment within. A reading of the *Travels* that neglects these Tubbian traits does not appreciate the nature and intention of Swift's work. Fascination with comic or exotic elements in Swift is an important tool for entrapment, for the reader is from this first stage on, step by step guided, or, rather, forced, into the sense that he is also implied in the satiric

attack, because he is completely incapable of escaping its attraction. Playing or tossing with Swift's comical elements, his Tubs, thus sooner or later leads to the awareness of first the universality and then the perverse subjectivity of satire, and the reader cannot help realizing that he himself has happily completed his own journey, not to remote nations but rather from the Tub's pleasant surface to its innermost satiric realms. This is where Gulliver's travels in fact lead the reader. The Tub as a mental image is omnipresent in Swift's satiric writings and the reader is bound to realize Swift's sly mechanism of entrapment.

Entrapment and Swift's Satiric Magnifying Glass

> *SATYR is a sort of Glass, wherein Beholders do generally discover every body's Face but their Own; which is the chief Reason for that kind Reception it meets in the World, and that so very few are offended with it.* (*Battle* 375)

Swift prefers the workings of satire to reasoning, for "*Reasoning* will never make a Man correct an ill Opinion, which by *Reasoning* he never acquired" (*PW* IX 78). To describe the workings of satire, Swift often uses images of mirrors. It is no surprise, then, that *Gulliver's Travels* in fact abounds in references to mirrors, spectacles and the like. Vision and perspective are indeed crucial to the *Travels*. In contrast to the ironic Swiftian statement above, Swift developed very effective strategies in his satires to avoid his readers' tendency to "*discover every body's face but their Own*." The effect of reader entrapment in Swift is rather the opposite. As Dyson noted long ago, "The satirist holds up for his readers to see a distorted image, and the reader is to be shocked into realization that the image is his own" (54).

As I would like to show in the following, satire in the *Travels* functions similarly to the Swiftian variety in the *Tale*. Swift employs his Tubbian strategies of reader entrapment, yet also introduces a new focus on satiric experimenting with perspective and proportion, stemming from notions of the satiric mirror and especially relevant to the first structurally coherent part of the *Travels*, Books I and II.

Thus, having laboriously crawled out of the Tub of Swift's *Tale*, having left behind the viciously subjective babble of the Hack, the reader is now invited to face the reflections of the *Travels*' different looking-glasses, and to see everything distorted through Gulliver's eyes. Whereas in the *Tale* main focus was laid on the brutal despotism of forcing an outrageous opinion upon the reader, this very same despotism in the *Travels* lies in the urging of bent and misshapen proportion and size on the reader's mind, performed at first perhaps in a less cruel and at least initially somewhat more light-hearted manner, but in the end to the same result: reader entrapment.

Distorting mirrors and the distorted perception of a fool are neat images for the workings of satire and at the same time excellent tools for the entrapment of readers. Magnifying glass imagery is a prominent feature of the *Travels*, and provides, in a similar way to the Tub, a telling programmatic image. Here is one of Gulliver's descriptions, after having spent some time in Brobdingnag, the country of giants, on his second voyage:

> This made me reflect upon the fair Skins of our *English* Ladies, who appear so beautiful to us, only because they are of our own Size and their Defects not to be seen but

> through a magnifying Glass, where we find by Experiment that the smoothest and whitest Skins look rough and coarse, and ill coloured.
>
> I remember when I was at [sic] Lilliput, the Complexions of those diminutive People appeared to me the fairest in the World: And talking upon this Subject with a Person of Learning there, who was an intimate Friend of mine; he said, that my Face appeared much fairer and smoother when he looked on me from the Ground, than it did upon nearer View when I took him up in my Hand, and brought him close; which he confessed was at first a very shocking Sight. […] On the other Side, discoursing of the Ladies in that Emperor's Court, he used to tell me, one had Freckles, another too wide a Mouth, a third too large a Nose; nothing of which I was able to distinguish […]. (*GT* 98/99)

This passage is as exemplary and as programmatic as the one introducing the image of the Tub examined at the beginning of my discussion of *A Tale of a Tub*, for it equally incorporates a portrayal of satiric objectives Swift pursues in *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift provides us with a description of satire's functioning as microscope or magnifying glass, the vision of which makes the baffled beholder envisage the "very shocking Sight" of flaws and defects that otherwise would have remained undetected and ignored. The spectator would have been totally unable to distinguish these weaknesses and imperfections, had he not been taken "upon nearer View." Moreover, Swift's satiric looking glass can offer views of the grandeur of England's ambitions and international relations made ridiculous, as well as unpleasant physical details intended to disgust the reader and thus attack him on such a private level as the human body. Thus, the passage anticipates Swift's experimentation with form, size, perspective and representation in the *Travels*, employed to the goal of satiric attack and reader entrapment.

Experimentation and the magnifying glass of course are crucial notions here, for Swift also includes a joke on the recently invented scientific tools of the microscope and the telescope. The development and increasingly common use of these instruments gave Swift, on the one hand, a very nice opportunity to play with extremes of perception and size, and, on the other hand, a neat occasion to criticize the outcome of scientific scrutiny, for what Gulliver sees through Swift's looking glass does not help him at all to acquire useful knowledge or to learn anything. In addition, Swift's adoption of the magnifying glass metaphor also constitutes justification of satire's perspective and vision based on incessant exaggerations, thus constant use of hyperbole.

In shifting perspectives, Swift introduces the question of man's position in the world and presents the human form and role as highly problematic, constantly unfit and disproportionate. Such a precarious situation is expressed by Gulliver's state in Brobdingnag:

> In this terrible Agitation of Mind I could not forbear thinking of *Lilliput*, whose Inhabitants looked upon me as the

> greatest Prodigy that ever appeared in the World […] I reflected what a Mortification it must prove to me to appear as inconsiderable in this Nation, as one single *Lilliputian* would be among us. […] Undoubtedly Philosophers are in the right when they tell us, that nothing is great or little otherwise than by Comparison: It might have pleased Fortune to let the *Lilliputians* find some Nation, where the People were as diminutive with respect to them, as they were to me. And who knows but that even this prodigious Race of Mortals might be equally overmatched in some distant Part of the World, whereof we have yet no Discovery? (*GT* 94/95)

Wherever he goes, Gulliver's human form seems progressively more disproportionate and out of place; and he is indeed getting dizzy looking into the labyrinth of different dimensions and perspectives, speculating about other people or species' different statures, bulk and nature. If we wish to take a look at one of those "Philosophers" Gulliver mentions, who "are in the right when they tell us, that nothing is great or little otherwise than by Comparison," French mathematician, scientist and philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) offers in his religious writings telling examples of the situation of dizzying disorientation Gulliver increasingly finds himself in. Pascal describes this very same, precarious human predicament in *Pensées* (published posthumously in 1670 and translated into English in 1688), which include insights into religious truths, yet coupled with scepticism of rational thought and theology:

> 84. H. *Disproportion de l'homme*
> […] Que l'homme, étant revenue à soi, considère ce qu'il est au prix de ce qui est; qu'il se regarde comme égaré dans ce canton détourné de la nature; et que, de ce petit cachot où il se trouve logé, j'entends l'univers, il apprenne à estimer la terre, les royaumes, les villes et soi-même son juste prix. Qu'est-ce qu'un homme dans l'infini?
> Mais pour lui présenter un autre prodige aussi étonnant, qu'il recherche dans ce qu'il connaît les choses les plus délicates. Qu'un ciron lui offre, dans la petitesse de son corps, des parties incomparablement plus petites […]
> Qu'il se perde dans ces merveilles, aussi étonnantes dans leur petitesse que les autres par leur étendue; car qui n'admirera que notre corps, qui tantôt n'était pas perceptible dans l'univers, imperceptible lui-même dans le sein du tout, soit à présent un colosse […]
> Qui se considérera de la sorte s'effrayera de soi-même, et […] il tremblera dans la vue de ces merveilles […]
> Car enfin qu'est-ce que l'homme dans la nature? Un néant à l'égard de l'infini, un tout à l'égard du néant, un milieu entre rien et tout. Infiniment éloigné de comprendre les extrêmes, la fin des choses et leur principe sont pour lui

> invinciblement cachés dans un secret impénétrable, également incapable de voir néant d'où il est tire, et l'infini où il est englouti. (47-50)

This is a very powerful description of man's situation as often perceived in Swift's time. Pascal presents many contemporary ideas that doubtless also inspired Swift's experimentation with size, proportion and representation. In addition, this passage is an impressive example of notions held and strategies pursued in what is frequently called fideistic scepticism, which will also be analyzed in this paper. It is Swift's goal in the *Travels* to represent satirically the basic human predicament Pascal portrays here. The experience of reader entrapment in Swiftian satire very much resembles the frightening and humbling vision Pascal provides: the reader is left alone, beholding Gulliver through Swift's looking glass, beholding the malevolent dwarfs, the benevolent giants, the insane scientists and the know-it-all horses, through Gulliver's eyes, and vainly looking for Swift to tell him what he should believe to be the meaning of this whole display of disproportion. Pascal's conclusion may very well describe a notion and a feeling Swift intends to evoke in his readers by way of entrapment: "Since he is infinitely removed from comprehending the extremes, the end of things and their beginning are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret."

This is a humbling position, almost hopeless, it seems, for human capacity is shown to be severely limited, and Swift shared Pascal's scepticism about the reach of human reason in the face and dimension of absolute truths. Pascal ends his meditation on the disproportion of man as follows:

> "Que fera-t-il donc, sinon d'apercevoir quelque apparence du milieu des choses, dans un désespoir éternel de connaître ni leur principe ni leur fin? Toutes choses sont sorties du néant et portées jusqu'à l'infini. Qui suivra ces étonnantes démarches? L'auteur de ces merveilles les comprend. Tout autre ne le peut faire." (84; 50)

According to Pascal, the only escape from "eternal despair" over human inadequacy, disproportion and incapacity is faith. Pascal's "middle of things" also seems to be the position Swift, yet very implicitly, places man in, with the imperative not to aspire further than this and to turn to faith in questions of the beginning or end of things.

Like Pascal, Swift aims at baffling his readers by way of various comparisons and thus creating diverse occasions for humbling experience. Swift's satire is powerful, for it includes attack on human pride, physical form and all the varieties of disproportion linked with these. Moreover, and unlike Pascal, Swiftian satire adds the ingredient of revulsion and distaste. Where Pascal, like most philosophers of the time, admires the glorious wonders of nature, taking the beautiful, "minute body and parts incomparably more minute" of a mite as example, the perfect order and function of "limbs with their joints, veins in the limbs, blood in the veins, humours in the blood, drops in

the humours, vapours in the drops," (72) Swift asks his own looking-glass-question: What if someone were to behold the glorious human body from a different perspective, say, a mite's? Here we return to the Lilliputian's assessment that Gulliver's complexion to him was a "very shocking Sight" (*GT* 99). It is clear that what Swiftian satire adds, in order to entrap and humble readers, to the dizzying effects of Pascal's awed description of the universe is a direct attack on the very nature and form of the human body. In this context, what would be more suitable for Swift to choose than a description of a Brobdingnagian Maid of Honour's dressing room, where we do not take a mite's perspective but diminutive Gulliver's?

> The Maids of Honor often invited *Glumdalclitch* to their Apartments, and desired she would bring me along with her […] They would often strip me naked from Top to Toe, and lay me at full Length in their Bosoms; wherewith I was much disgusted, because, to say the Truth, a very offensive Smell came from their Skins; which I do not mention or intend to the Disadvantage of those excellent Ladies, for whom I have all Manner of Respect: But, I conceive, that my Sense was more acute in Proportion to my Littleness […] they would strip themselves to the Skin, and put on their Smocks in my Presence, while I was placed on their Toylet directly before their naked Bodies; which, I am sure, to me was very far from being a tempting Sight, or from giving me any other Motions than those of Horror and Disgust […]. (*GT* 120)

Swift wants us to realize the relativity of perception, the dependence on perspective, and he thus grants us a (for many too) deep look in his satiric mirror.[58] Still, crucially he leaves the question about the existence of any "true," objective, or reliable perspective unresolved. In addition, Swift does not say what "perspective" means in these circumstances: is it mental, physical, or even something distinctly different? Crude images of physicality, sexuality, even defecation function to remind the reader of mankind's absurd situation as a means between the physical and the spiritual. Swift wants to make us feel the disproportion of man, and plans to force us into the Tubbian insight, as Monk puts it, that our "beauty is only apparent; our disproportion is real" (64). This is Swift's trap concerning the physical. In spite of the fact that we know that we have only been observing the scene from almost an insect's, that is, Gulliver's view (Gulliver in this land of giants being a "Creature who had no Sort of Consequence"), and that, in common proportion, the sight would have been quite different, Swift succeeds in evoking disgust in order to hurt

[58] Gulliver adds some more detail about the maids' urinating in his presence and cannot help mentioning, in a tone which almost sounds self-congratulatory, that "The handsomest among these Maids of Honour, a pleasant frolicksome girl of sixteen, would sometimes set me astride upon one of her Nipples; with many other Tricks, wherein the Reader will excuse me for not being over particular." However, he adds that he "was so displeased, that I entreated Glumdalclitch to contrive some Excuse for not seeing that young Lady any more" (96).

pride. Swift's physical defamiliarization, leading to the unpleasant Tubbian insight of human disproportion, no doubt ranks for many readers among the worst of entrapment experiences in Swift.

Poor Gulliver indeed finds, as Pascal predicts will happen to anyone forced to realize man's basic disproportion, great cause for humiliation on his first two journeys, for wherever he goes, he does not quite fit in, to say the least. How is poor Gulliver, and the reader, supposed to find his place when Swift relentlessly keeps on changing his satiric mirrors before his gullible *persona* finally manages to approximately locate his position? Even if Gulliver in Lilliput notices his pre-eminence, in bodily measures, and even if he is forced to accept the Brobdingnagian giants' physical superiority (there is really no other option), the look in Swift's satiric mirrors always includes struggle; and his shifts of perspectives and proportions make any settling of issues difficult. The chain of being in Swift's satiric cosmos is always in motion, always in conflict, always demanding reorientation, as the following amusing episode from Gulliver's stay in Brobdingnag shows:

> Nothing angred and mortified me so much as the Queen's Dwarf, who being of the lowest Stature that was ever in that Country […] became so insolent at seeing a Creature so much beneath him, that he would always affect to swagger and look big as he passed by me in the Queen's Antichamber […] and he seldom failed of a smart Word or two upon my Littleness; against which I could only revenge my self by calling him *Brother* [...]. (*GT* 111/112)

It is hilarious and telling to observe how the dwarf adopts a new notion of pride when finding Gulliver even smaller than himself. This, incidentally, is not at all unlike Gulliver's newly acquired self-esteem in Lilliput, also based merely on size. Gulliver's only way of being able to revenge himself for the abuses he has to experience as a small man in a land of giants tellingly demonstrates his utter helplessness in Brobdingnag: he can only call a dwarf his brother, thus losing his last streak of self-respect.

In this context, the order of Gulliver's first two travels is, of course, very important. Whereas the first journey offers Gulliver, and the identifying reader, fantasies about being very big and imposing, the second voyage evaporates such feelings of grandeur and provokes feelings of shock over the insignificance and helplessness Gulliver, and with him the reader, has to face. To return to Pascal, "He who regards himself in this light will be afraid of himself, and […] tremble at the sight of these marvels" (84; 49-50). Reading the *Travels* is moving in the mazes of Swift's satiric universe, being, in Pascal's words "lost in this remote corner of nature" and estimating "at their true value the earth, kingdoms, cities, and himself" (84; 48).

Swift's Gullible *Persona*: Gulliver as the Hack's Fellow Bedlamite

> And out of this we raise our *Tale of a Tub*.
> *Tub*. No, Mr. *In-and-In,* my *Tale of a Tub,*
> By your leave, I am *Tub,* the Tale's of me,
> And my Adventures! I am Squire *Tub,*
> *Subjectum Fabulæ*.[59]

Let us now take Lemuel Gulliver himself "upon nearer View." At first sight, Swift's *persona* seems very average, of mediocre qualities and skills, almost Everyman, quite boring and highly pedantic in his descriptions of circumstantial details. We come to learn that Gulliver enjoyed education at Emanuel College, Cambridge, and at Leiden in the Netherlands, where he attended the famous medical school (*GT* 39), so that his general education may be regarded above average and links him with Dissent. Thus, he is reasonably well-read and intelligent, though not clever, and is a committed observer and reporter.[60] Gulliver is a rather simple man, cultivating a style of straightforward reporting. He also characterizes himself as an honest man, making a straight account of his travels and by his very nature little inclined to imagination, invention or even forgery:

> I thought we were already over-stocked with Books of Travels: That nothing could now pass which was not extraordinary; wherein I doubted, some Authors less consulted Truth than their own Vanity and Interest, or the Diversion of ignorant Readers. That my Story could contain little besides common Events, without those ornamental Descriptions […] with which most Writers abound.
> (*GT* 144/145)

This, of course, is a Swiftian irony and joke, in the face of the strange and grotesque experiences Gulliver is reporting and the difficulties of interpretation resultant from Swift's employment of a narrating *persona*. The reader has to see through Gulliver's eyes and in the end make sure he does not share most of the *persona*'s impressions. Matters are indeed not quite clear-cut concerning Lemuel Gulliver. Reading and interpreting his accounts implies an uneasy oscillation of views on Gulliver, a wavering between regarding Gulliver at times a character, sometimes a spokesman of the author, or, in fact, most of the time a mere rhetorical device or *persona*. It has often been noted that Gulliver cannot be considered the regular character that inhabits realist

[59] Jonson, Ben. *A Tale of a Tub* (1633). *Ben Jonson's Entire Works.* Vol. III. Eds. Herford, C. H. and Percy Simpson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927, V; VII.
[60] As his name famously suggests, there are many situations in the book in which the reader can easily recognize Gulliver's gullible character.

novels in the sense of the *Bildungsroman*.[61] Gulliver's inconsistencies and varying viewpoints again are very similar to the Hack's and make it quite obvious that Swift was not at all interested in making Gulliver experience any kind of consistent mental development or even improvement, let alone have any extent of stable opinion.[62]

Thus, again similar to the structure of the Tub, Swift's satire in *Gulliver's Travels* exhibits a marked trait of circularity. Concerning Gulliver's mental development or a general building of plot, this variety again is different from a novel in the sense that rather than showing an unfolding and developing plot, leading to inner and outer changes in character, satiric plot consists of repetition and intensification, of repeatedly meeting with the same satirically constructed situations, which may only lead to the *persona*'s, and potentially the reader's, final disillusion or entrapment. This is the only consistent and bitter development Gulliver experiences, and as for Gulliver, change happens only in Book IV. Starting out as a rather benevolent, good-humoured, and a little naïve average Englishman and patriot, Gulliver at last grows disillusioned, utterly sick of his country, society and mankind in general, a mad misanthrope who prefers the company of horses in the stable to his own family. It need not be emphasized that Gulliver's travel or final development is basically intended to be the reader's, too. Such is the journey Swift sends his readers on, the trap he builds, and it is again rather hard to work out a consistent authorial line through the *persona*'s dreary final perception of matters, as Brian Tippett notes:

> [Gulliver] may, as in author-centred approaches, be regarded as his creator's *alter ego*, the spokesman of Swift's conscious opinions and the betrayer of his prejudices and unconscious impulses. He may on the other hand be presented as a consciously manipulated device distanced from Swift's own viewpoint and used, indeed, to represent what Swift himself abhorred. Only occasionally is either view developed to the point at which it totally excludes the other: the needle of critical opinion tends to settle, though with a good deal of wavering, between the two extremes. That is to say, Gulliver is seen as Swift's spokesman *and* his satirical butt, as a self-projection *and* an embodiment of what he wished to ridicule. That we make sense of these apparent contradictions is the result of learning […] to live from moment to moment as we read the *Travels*. (32)

Hence, like in *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift's use of satiric *persona* in *Gulliver's Travels* constitutes an apt occasion for reader entrapment, and despite the fact that

[61] A short comparison with Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has already been made.

[62] Robert C. Elliott notes that Gulliver is "an abstraction, manipulated in the service of satire" and illustrates his inconsistency as a character by pointing out the discrepancy between his refusal to enslave a free people in Lilliput and his suggestion to the king of Brobdingnag to use gunpowder to keep his subjects in control (200).

it may sometimes be possible to "make sense" of Swift's "apparent contradictions", the reader had better not be too optimistic about Swift's allowing us to grasp his sense and thus to manage to get a hold of such a "result of learning".

The following statement has frequently been looked upon as a rare instance where we in fact hear Swift's own voice in Gulliver's: "Undoubtedly Philosophers are in the Right when they tell us, that nothing is great or little otherwise than by Comparison" (*GT* 94/95). Viewed and measured in an idealistic context, mankind has to fail, such fate being demonstrated as inevitable. This seems to be the implication here. Yet, this would mean snatching the statement from its satiric context: looking for Swift's personal opinions and stances in statements by his *personae* is highly problematic; it is a noticeable fact that Gulliver draws the wrong conclusion from this thought, expecting the Brobdingnagians to be a menace to him proportionate to their size: "For, as human Creatures are observed to be more Savage and cruel in Proportion to their Bulk; what could I expect but to be a Morsel in the Mouth of the first among these enormous Barbarians who should happen to seize me?" (*GT* 94) Gulliver's expectations are deceptive, for the Brobdingagian giants turn out to be benevolent, as opposed to the Lilliputian dwarfs.

Such is the problematic context of Swift's experiment with proportions, dimensions and scales in the *Travels*. Predictably, the crisis and conflict remains unsettled. It may be seriously doubted whether a reasonable, in other words, humanly possible, norm, is indeed of much help here. The importance of positive norms the *Travels* sneakily introduces such as benevolent, hospitable and conservative Lord Munodi, who despises the insane innovations fashionable in his country in Book III, as well as humane, civilized and helpful Captain Mendez in Book IV, becomes rather relative, too, or even rather irrelevant, when viewed in the broader context of Swift's complex playing with perspectives (Schmidt 1977, 115).

To sum up, what happens with potential norms in the *Travels* is the same as in the *Tale*, where Martin's stance of a middle way, thus in the religious allegory Anglicanism, looks pathetically mediocre and even cowardly when compared to Peter and Jack's exuberant and energetic folly. Looking for such explicit answers or obvious norms would be asking too much. Satire, and Swift's satire in particular, denies such answers in order to remain true to its own nature and intention of reader entrapment.

Entrapment "between Nothing and Everything"

> [M]y Ideas were wholly taken up with what I saw on every Side of me; and I winked at my own Littleness, as People do at their own Faults. (*GT* 145)

Gulliver, an average Englishman, is completely out of place on the islands of Lilliput and Brobdingnag alike. The passage above expresses Gulliver's anxiety, his finding fault with himself, with his form and size, to an extent unknown before. Like the reader's imagination, Gulliver's mind is captivated by what surrounds him on his travels; and, comparing himself to these unfamiliar and rather frightening environments leads to the uneasy feeling of shame, of realizing his own deficits and weaknesses. In other words, what Swift offers here is another description of the effect of entrapment, the Tubbian aim and nature of his satire.

In Lilliput we meet Gulliver the powerful, even if rather awkward, giant, who is worried about accidentally destroying the tiny Lilliputian inhabitants and their settlements (the scale of everything in Lilliput to human size being generally about one to twelve). However, disproportionate Gulliver is at the same time proud of being of such massive physical importance to the Lilliputians, as becomes obvious in his account of local troops of soldiers ("three Thousand Foot, and a Thousand Horse") passing under his breeches :

> His Majesty gave Orders, upon Pain of Death, that every Soldier in his March should observe the strictest Decency, with regard to my Person; which, however, could not prevent some of the younger Officers from turning up their Eyes as they passed under me. And, to confess the Truth, my Breeches were at that Time in so ill a Condition, that they afforded some Opportunities for Laughter and Admiration. (*GT* 59)

Swift makes his *persona* tell a silly episode like a self-congratulatory idiot here, who cannot help being proud of himself when he notices the Lilliputians' admiration of his genitals. Yet, Swift intends his readers to realize the ridiculousness of such an attitude; he wants us to see that Gulliver is actually nothing but an average human being, comparing himself with a people of pigmies and being very silly in taking any pride in his size. In addition, the passage above expresses Gulliver's preoccupation with his sexuality, his fixated and continual returning to accounts expressing his sexual power and attractiveness. Gulliver rather disturbingly keeps on making references emphasizing his sexual desirability, and by expressing his apparent confidence unknowingly provides the reader with a picture of sexual obsession. Swift does not specify Gulliver's quirk further, but Gulliver's bragging

accounts of a married Lilliputian gentlewoman, a young Brobdingnagian maid of honour, or a young Yahoo girl taking a fancy to him in highly sexual terms is ridiculed by the sheer incompatibility concerning proportion of the people involved.[63]

A rather similar instance of obsession, equally preposterous and preoccupied with size, is exemplified by the Lilliputians, a people of pigmies who appear far from being exempt from pride and vanity, as the emperor of Lilliput's presumption in the following preamble shows:

> GOLBASTO MOMAREN EVLAME GURDILO SHEFIN MULLY ULLY GUE, most Mighty Emperor of Lilliput, Delight and Terror of the Universe, whose Dominions extend five Thousand Blustrugs, (about twelve Miles in Circumference) to the Extremities of the Globe: Monarch of all Monarchs: Taller than the Sons of Men; whose Feet press down to the Center, and whose Head strikes against the Sun: At whose Nod the Princes of the Earth shake their Knees [...].
> (*GT* 59/60)

Needless to say that, taking into account the size of this king and his kingdom, the universe should find it rather hard even to detect the terror created by such a mighty monarch. Despite his tiny size, the emperor is shown to be inclined to megalomania; and Swift is very tongue-in-cheek in passing mention of the true extension of his mighty dominions. The general allusion to and joke about monarchs' pride of their dominions when being compared, again in Pascal's vein, to the universe is very clear. In the same manner, Swift makes fun of political and religious disputes among the Lilliputians. The two factions of Big-Endians and Small-Endians divide Lilliputian society, wherein the emperor of Lilliput is shown to favour the Small-Endians:

> We compute the *Tramecksan*, or High-Heels, to exceed us in number; but the Power is wholly on our Side. We apprehend his Imperial Highness, the Heir to the Crown, to have some Tendency towards the High-Heels; at least we can plainly discover one of his Heels higher than the other, which gives him a Hobble in his Gait. (*GT* 64)

As expressed in this passage, High-Heels may be regarded as representing Tories, whereas Low-Heels are Whigs. The allusion to the formation of the two-party system in England is made obvious.[64] Swift was always sceptical of the

[63] However, as with the Yahoo girl, it must be admitted that Swift's irony consists of the actual *possibility* of sexual intercourse, as Rawson notes, "the episode was expressly planted by Swift to indicate that Gulliver's, and 'our', identity with the Yahoos is an objective fact of the narrative, and not merely a distorted projection of Gulliver's misanthropy" (96).

[64] The Tories initially consisted of a group of politicians who accepted that Roman Catholic James II be crowned king, whereas the Whigs were formed around opposition to James's ascension, and finally succeeded in deposing him in the "Glorious Revolution." The Tories "desired not to overthrow but modify the revolution settlement" and intended to "depress the Dissenters" (Trevelyan 1958, 453). Whigs held that Parliament should gain more authority, were

two-party system and he placed Anglican interests first in his decisions. The Tories' support of the Anglican Church explains much, if not everything, about Swift's involvement with them and why he turned to their assistance after having initially supported the Whigs (Oakleaf 2003, 38). The Tories had little sympathy for the war with France (1702-1713) and criticized its enormous costs and the way financiers and military men profited from it; and Swift's influential *Conduct of the Allies* (1711) was written from this perspective (Ehrenpreis II 500). Swift highly doubted the possibility or desirability of classifying various differing political interests in a two-party system. However, in an attempt to do so, he described his political stance as follows: "I found myself much inclined to be what they called a Whig in politics," but, "as to religion, I confessed myself to be a High-churchman" (*PW* VIII, 120). In spite of the telling fact that Swift carefully avoided terming himself a Tory (High Church was only closely associated with Tory), it becomes clear that he was unwilling to make a commitment to parties without having real issues in mind. Modern scholars of Swift's politics generally agree that there is "integrity and coherence in Swift's mature political convictions" (Higgins 1). As Oakleaf (2003, 38) notes, "Swift's not uncommon position seems inconsistent only if we accept the political stereotypes Swift did not so much foster." Still, in this whole context of political factions and heels, the passing remark may be allowed that Swift himself, "reputed to be a Whig at the beginning of Queen Anne's reign but a Tory by the end of it," (Higgins 1) might also be rightly accused of a certain "Hobble in his Gait."

From the height of heels, that is, political parties, we turn to the ways of breaking eggs, that is, religious disputes:

> [H]is Majesty's Grandfather, while he was a boy, going to eat an Egg, and breaking it according to the Ancient Practice, happened to cut one of his Fingers. Whereupon the Emperor his Father, published an Edict, commanding all his Subjects, upon great Penalties, to break the smaller End of their Eggs. The People so highly resented this Law, that our Histories tell us, there have been six Rebellions raised on that Account [...] It is computed, that eleven Thousand Persons have, at several Times, suffered Death, rather than submit to break their Eggs at the smaller End. Many hundred large Volumes have been published upon this Controversy: But the Books of the Big-Endians have

tolerant of Dissent and later championed the Hanoverian kings. Swift's contemporaries would have had little difficulty in discerning the rather open reference here to Hanoverian King George I (1714-27), under whose reign the Whigs regained power from the Tories. George is obviously alluded to by the mention of his "*Austrian* Lip." Equally, George II (1727-60) is being made fun of, for he did not agree with his father's government, thus giving occasion of hope among the Tories to return to power on his ascending to the throne. The Whigs favoured political reforms and religious freedom and sought an alliance with financial and commercial interests. As opposed to this, the Tories were staunch defenders of the Anglican Church and representatives of landowners.

> been long forbidden, and the whole Party rendred [sic] incapable by Law of holding Employments. (*GT* 64)

When the emperor of Lilliput orders his subjects to break their eggs at the smaller end, opposition from conservative circles and their ensuing containment leads to serious civil turmoil. The cruel outcome of the disagreement over such trifling instances as at which end to break an egg shows the pettiness and vindictiveness of Lilliputian religious and political discord. This, we learn, makes many Big-Endians flee to the neighbouring island of Blefuscu, to live there in exile. We are astounded by the spite of Lilliputians and at the same time cannot avoid a contemptuous smile when reading the account of these tiny people's weighty affairs. The many struggles that shook Britain and Ireland from the reign of Henry VIII to Swift's days are being thus satirized: the Church of England becoming independent of the Roman Catholic Church and thus the official Protestant church in England by the Act of Supremacy; the resultant conflict between Anglican Church and Catholicism, which resulted in social unrest and led to suppression of Catholics in the Test Acts; the escape of Royalists and Catholics to France, fleeing persecution; the rivalry between political factions, linked to the questions of religion; the Tories and the Whigs.[65]

In letting us observe the conduct of Lilliputians through Gulliver's eyes, Swift makes us see how ridiculous politics, with its petty rivalries, is when seen from a distance or put into a larger context. We again come across one of the moments in Swift when the customary has been made strange to evoke a calculated response in the reader:

> The most effective literary work […] forces the reader into awareness of his of her customary codes and expectations. The work interrogates and transforms the implicit beliefs we bring to it, "disconfirms" our routine

[65] Big-Endians are Catholics, or Tories, whereas Small-Endians stand for Protestants, or Whigs. Blefuscu may be equalled to France, Lilliput to England. Swift first refers to the "Edict" (Act of Supremacy) issued by Henry VIII in 1534 which, in the broader context of Henry's wish to legally divorce Catherine of Aragon (his late brother's widow he had married on the dispensation of Pope Julius II) and marry Anne Boleyn to gain security of a male heir, declared that the King of England was the supreme head of the *Ecclesia Anglicana* and thus denied the continuation of the Pope's authority in England (and, specifically, in Henry's marriage plans). This basically constituted the Church of England's separation from Rome (Davies 150).
Secondly, he ironically depicts the conflict between Tories (among whom there was a Roman Catholic branch) and Whigs (mostly Protestants) in England. After the Restoration and then death of Charles II (1660), his brother James II (1685-8) returned from exile and succeeded to the throne in spite of strong resistance to his being Catholic. He was shortly deposed when a group of political and religious factions invited William of Orange (crowned William III in 1689) to overthrow him in what was called "The Glorious Revolution." With the Jacobite allies decisively beaten by the Williamite army in Ireland (Battle of the Boyne 1690), James fled to France, whence he later made unsuccessful attempts to regain the crown. In exile, James became known as "the Pretender" (Trevelyan 1958, 427-428). The Test Acts (1673) discriminated against Catholics by way of excluding them from different offices. Catholics who wanted to gain certain public offices were required to take a public oath, swearing allegiance to the Church of England.

> habits of perception and so forces us to acknowledge them for the first time for what they are. Rather than merely reinforce our given perceptions […] [satire] violates or transgresses these normative ways of seeing, and so teaches us new codes for understanding […] brings us into deeper self-consciousness, catalyzes a more critical view of our own identities. It is as though what we have been "reading," in working our way through a book, is ourselves. (Eagleton 79)

The last sentence cannot be overstated: what Gulliver's travels to remote nations in the end are designed to do is create awareness of the faults not in faraway places, but in ourselves; and this experience is far from pleasant. Thus, Swift's contemporaries were forced to behold a distorted reflection of themselves in the Lilliputians and this made it a rather uncomfortable process for the contemporary reader to by degrees become aware that the Lilliputians who at first seemed very droll, likeable and interesting in the end prove to be arrogant, treacherous, cruel, envious and vengeful. Recklessness and insatiable political aspiration is demonstrated by the emperor's desire to destroy and enslave the neighbouring island and empire of Blefuscu, after Gulliver has captured their fleet. These little people are anything but harmless; and their diminutive size remains in stark and ironic contrast to their immense ambitions and greed, a telling picture Swift's satiric mirror shows of politics.

Due to his denial to assist the king in subjugating Blefuscu (after having saved Lilliput by capturing the Blefuscan fleet) as well as his unconventional way of extinguishing a fire in the royal palace by urinating on it ("it is Capital in any Person, of what Quality soever, to make water within the Precincts of the Palace" (*GT* 70)), Gulliver is eventually charged with high treason and is presented the Lilliputians' intent to impeach him.[66] Swift, of course, evokes more than a faint sensation about royal ingratitude here. As is also reported to Gulliver, an imminent Lilliputian, "*Reldresal*, principal Secretary for private affairs," offers in his speech held in the context of another debate on Gulliver's alleged high treason a further example of the Lilliputians' state of mind and character:

[66] As has been noted, the Lilliputian charges made against Gulliver parallel the ones brought against Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke, who formed the Tory government under Queen Anne, and their negotiations for the Peace of Utrecht, which in 1713 ended war with France (the War of the Spanish Succession), but in the eye of the public was shameful and even illegal, for Oxford and Bolingbroke had taken it upon themselves to make the treaty, to finish it before the death of weak Queen Anne and consequent imminent change of government and politics. Swift himself had enlisted as propagandist to gain support for the Tory stance and weaken popular opposition in his *Conduct of the Allies* (1711) (Trevelyan 1958, 485-490). The Tory peacemakers were first given titles, but, when George I became king, were tried for treason by the Whigs under Prime Minister Walpole (who in the *Travels* is represented by Flimnap, treasurer of Lilliput). Marloborough's warning Bolingbroke of the trial is paralleled in the *Travels* by Skyresh Bologolam, admiral of the Liliputian fleet and Gulliver's enemy, who warns Gulliver of the threat of impeachment.

> That if his Majesty, in Consideration of your Services, and pursuant to his Own merciful Disposition, would please to spare your Life, and only give order to put out both your Eyes; he humbly conceived, that by this Expedient, Justice might in some measure be satisfied, and all the World would applaud the *Lenity* of the Emperor, as well as the fair and generous Proceedings of those who have the Honour to be his Counsellors. (*GT* 81)

It is obvious that it is not only Gulliver who, "having never been designed a Courtier" and being "so ill a Judge of Things," is completely at a loss when trying to discover the alleged "*Lenity* and Favour of this Sentence" and is thus bound to conceive it "rather to be rigorous than gentle," in Swift's tongue-in-cheek ironic understatement (*GT* 81). As Ehrenpreis (III 453) notes, it constitutes a Swiftian reference to Hanoverian King George I who, in his speech to parliament after the Jacobite rising of 1715 and its ruthless and brutal suppression, included descriptions of "the numerous instances of mercy" he had shown and his great "clemency" in the treatment of the rebels.[67] Gulliver the giant, although, as we have seen, himself far from perfect, acts as temporary moral instance among the Lilliputians immense appetites and passions. Swift makes us see, in addition to Gulliver's physical disproportion, another instance of Pascal's basic "disproportion of man"; only this time, the disproportion is to be situated in the realms of character, ethics and morality.

In the midst of greedy dwarfs, Gulliver here for once operates as a positive human standard, making the inhabitants of Lilliput only look the more malicious, hateful and shamefully paltry. Their society is deficient and lacks vital elements such as affection and close family bonds. The opinion is held "that Parents are the last to be trusted with the Education of their own Children" and children are thus sent to "publick Nurseries" (*GT* 73). Such policy is practised due to the following arguments:

> For, since the Conjunction of Male and Female is founded upon the great Law of Nature, in order to propagate and continue the Species; the Lilliputians will needs have it, that Men and Women are joined together like other Animals, by the Motive of Concupiscence; and that their Tenderness towards their Young, proceedeth from the like natural Principle: For which Reason they will never allow, that a Child is under any Obligation to his Father for begetting him, or to his Mother for bringing him into the World […]. (*GT* 73)

All human relationships are reduced to the realm of what is deemed useful and practical, this leaving no room for feelings such as love or gratitude. Politics as well as manners at court have been equally corrupted: courtiers

[67] *The Parliamentary History of England*. 36 vols. Ed. William Cobett. London, 1806-1820, vol. VII, cols. 386, 448 (Quoted in Higgins 151).

and ministers are chosen not for their aptness for political office but by "that infamous Practice of acquiring great Employment by dancing on the Ropes, or Badges of Favour and Distinction by leaping over Sticks, and creeping under them" (*GT* 73), in other words by their skills in amusing and flattering the emperor, who himself is a reckless, megalomaniacal and greedy monarch. Swift's accusation is double-edged: important public positions are granted without taking into account the relevant talents in administration and politics; at the same time, succeeding at court is a risky business, for it resembles the skill of dancing on a rope without falling.

In the context of such vice, Gulliver's stance in the question of enslaving the kingdom of Blefuscu indeed for once seems to point at a human positive. However, this function is evidently only tactical and temporary and ought not be overestimated, for the way Gulliver perceives the inhabitants of Lilliput is meant to show us the image of nothing other than ourselves taken from a distance, in the perspective of a higher consciousness beholding the doings of mankind. Swift's intention is clear in confronting the reader with man's physical and moral disproportion and corruption.

In Brobdingnag, where we make the acquaintance of gigantic creatures about sixty foot tall, matters are the other way round. Swift has changed his looking glass again, and we meet Gulliver the dwarf, whose physical insignificance and constant fear of being trampled on reduces him, the human "mean between nothing and everything", to return to Pascal's scale, very close to the nothing pole, even though he is a great attraction and well-known among the Brobdingnagian giants, who love to make fun of him and regard him an exponent of some kind of travelling fair entertainment. Such a view clearly shows Gulliver's rope dance between power and weakness, between importance and insignificance. However, as is pointed out by Iser, the reader has to fill the text's gaps himself, create his own understanding, and decide if the situation depicted in the text is indeed ridiculous or dreadful. Thus, laughter in Swift is highly problematic:

> Der Leser muss daher nicht nur den falschen Anschein durchschauen, sondern in verstärktem Masse die Voraussetzungen des richtigen Verhaltens entdecken, damit die in der Lächerlichkeit der Laster aufscheinende Überlegenheit nicht ihrerseits zum falschen Anschein wird. In diesem Vorgang zeigt sich ein beachtenswerter Funktionswandel des Lächerlichen […] und wird zum Anstoss für die Reflexion des Lesers, die in der entlarvenden Verstellung virtuell enthaltene Moral zu konkretisieren. (1972, 65/66)

In all probability, most readers will experience an impression of Swift's making Gulliver look tragic-comically disproportionate here, linked with the uneasy feeling that the final reality will be tragedy which is intended to affect and include them. Yet, Swift does not tell, purposely, in Iser's vein, "Um eine solche Bewusstseinsoperation auszulösen, darf die […] verfolgte Zielvorstellung nicht Gegenstand des Erzählens werden. Denn erst die Rekonstruktion des Nicht-

Erzählten – des richtigen Verhaltens also – macht dieses für den Leser zur Realität" (1972, 66).

Physical comparison with the locals makes Gulliver's existence in fact seem entirely inconsequential. However, he is at this point still able to appreciate the comedy of his situation and he even finds it difficult to take his own and his fellow Europeans' physical form and proportion all too seriously:

> [I]f I then beheld a Company of *English* Lords and Ladies in their Finery and Birth-day Cloaths, acting their several Parts in the most courtly Manner of Strutting, and Bowing and Prating; to say the Truth; I should have been strongly tempted to laugh as much at them as this King and his Grandees did at me. Neither indeed could I forbear smiling at my self, when the Queen used to place me upon her Hand towards a Looking-Glass, by which both our Persons appeared before me in full View together; and there could nothing be more ridiculous than the Comparison: So that I really began to imagine my self dwindled many Degrees below my usual Size. (*GT* 111)

We may laugh along with Gulliver here, but we are never to forget how quickly our laughter is changed into shock by Swift. We have met the tiny Lilliputians' moral weaknesses, their many passions, selfish and greedy natures which seem disproportionate to their diminutive physique. Among the giants on the isolated peninsula of Brobdingnag, matters turn to the opposite: the giants' moral values are far from being as boorish as their bodies appear to threateningly suggest to poor Gulliver sitting in the twelve-metre-tall corn field.

On the contrary: by way of a fierce shift of perspective, an example of why it is impossible to regard Swift's narrator a consistent character, Gulliver, who seemed honest, more or less likeable and gentle among the Lilliputians, now appears pitiless and ethically unfeeling compared to the benign Brobdingnagian giants. The Brobdingnagians are in fact a picture of peaceful simplicity; practically-minded, good-humoured giants, they do not in the least care about "Abstractions and Transcendentals" (*GT* 135). In this respect, they might even be claimed to come rather close to being a Swiftian model of common sense. Yet, the Brobdingnagians' position in a utopia-like state is at least incomplete and ought not be torn out of context and overestimated.

When Gulliver is brought to live at the king's court, to the entertainment and delight of the queen, he is questioned by the king about his native country; and he subsequently gives an account of English society, politics and military conflicts with the enthusiastically patriotic intention "to celebrate the Praise of my own dear native Country in a Style equal to its Merits and Felicity" (*GT* 128). It is obvious that Swift puts another ironic mask of foolish blindness on poor Gulliver's face here, for he makes his *persona* uncritically and even approvingly give a detailed report about all the crimes and vices to be detected in English society, England's class system, her history, laws, constitution and warfare. Of course, what is very surprising for Gulliver but completely predictable for the reader is that the emperor of Brobdingnag's

summary of Gulliver's historical account includes a devastating attack on the English social, political, legal and moral system:

> His Majesty [...] taking me into his Hands, and stroaking me gently, delivered himself in these Words, which I shall never forget, nor the Manner he spoke them in. My little Friend *Grildrig*; you have made a most admirable Panegyrick upon your Country. [...] But by what I have gathered from your own Relation [...] I cannot but conclude the Bulk of your Natives, to be the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth. (*GT* 132)

Such a shattering review of Gulliver's eager account is completely foreseeable, for, as Gulliver has noticed before, the Brobdingnagians are a kind, caring, peaceful people (which is demonstrated by the king's behaviour); they are practical, rather unsophisticated and very common-sensical. When Gulliver has given another highly ironic report on the invention of gun powder and is offering to teach Brobdingnagians its production, the king is again "struck with Horror" and "amazed how so impotent and groveling an Insect" as Gulliver "could entertain such inhuman Ideas" (*GT* 134). The tone of this comment shows the otherwise very gentle king's confusion and displeasure at Gulliver's account and offer. We find Gulliver now in the emperor of Lilliput's position of reckless ambition and acquisitiveness.

Gulliver is very impressed by his various journeys, and although a consistent or convincing personal development of his main character is basically at odds with Swift's overall strategy, it can be noted that Gulliver changes by degrees and gullibly adopts the perspectives of past journeys, this gradually leading to his final alienation from anything that is human. When he returns from his voyage to Brobdingnag, he perceives of his fellow Englishmen as dwarfs, finding it very difficult to readapt his vision and perspective to a human standard: "I was equally confounded at the Sight of so many Pigmies; for such I took them to be, after having so long accustomed my Eyes to the monstrous Objects I had left" (*GT* 142). He continues that

> As I was on the Road; observing the Littleness of the Houses, the Trees, the Cattle and the People, I began to think my self in *Lilliput*. I was afraid of trampling on every Traveller I met; and often called aloud to have them stand out of the Way; so that I had like to have gotten one or two broken Heads for my Impertinence. (*GT* 146)

This passage, however exhilarating, doubtlessly offers more than just the hidden portent of Gulliver's final disorientation and mental derangement. Thus, the reader is warned as early as this that adoption of Gulliver's notions and opinions had better be avoided. However, Swift entraps us in his vision of human disproportion: we are lured and forced to see through Gulliver's eyes, which leads us to being personally involved and affected by satire. Yet, seeing, in this sense, is definitely not believing.

A Voyage to Laputa: Swift's Theory of Relativity and Entrapment

> But then only will there be good ground of hope for the further advance of knowledge, where there shall be received and gathered together into natural history a variety of experiments, which are of no use in themselves.[68]

The first two books of the *Travels* form a unity in their reversal of proportion. Thus, the form of Books I and II is effective for Swift's satiric purpose of unsettling the reader with the shared features stemming from his use of a size and mirror metaphor. The second half of the book is not as parallel and formally satisfying as this. Before turning to a discussion of Swift's satiric theory of relativity, it thus becomes necessary to take another look at the *Travels*' overall structure.

Book III, as opposed to the other three parts of the *Travels*, appears in a loosely episodic structure. There is no simple inversion or shift in perception which holds Books III and IV together; thus the step from the first half of the *Travels* to the second is not by any means logical or symmetrical, which some readers found fault with. Not enough of Swift's comments on his work on the *Travels* have come to us as to allow definite conclusions about his general plan or process, but it has frequently been suggested that Book III was inserted last, mostly because of its various different elements and very loose structure that contrasts rather sharply with the rest of the book. Most critics agree that Swift probably used the third voyage for satiric attacks he did not have the possibility to place in the other three books.

If this be true, Swift would have done so without obeying a governing plan as to the changes in psychological effect this would bring to the book as a whole. Still, the order works unnervingly well, for Swift challenges the reader by suddenly changing the structure and concept, by robbing him of a logic of familiarity, of a firm sense of direction and form. To sum up, Swift's basic steps in the *Travels* are diminution and magnification in Books I and II, a rapid varying of eccentricities in Book III, and a return to a single direction of moral and philosophical challenge in Book IV.

As we have seen in the *Travels*' use of looking Glass imagery as well as in Pascal, the idea of limitless relativity and resultant scepticism was anything but unknown in Swift's time. In the context of scientific criticism in Gulliver's third voyage, it may not be totally amiss to recall Albert Einstein's famous exposition of his theory of relativity, including a straight mocking allusion to the imagery Swift employs in the *Travels*. Einstein states that time is a function of velocity,

[68] Bacon, Francis. *The New Organon* (1620). *The Works of Francis Bacon*. 14 vols. Eds. James Spedding, R. L. Ellis and D. D. Heath. (London: 1860) vol. 4. Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe in Vierzehn Bänden. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag Günther Holzboog, 1962, I; 90, 77.

which leads to a number of implications that seem to be at odds with intuition and commonsense, such as a watch in outer space travelling around the earth going more slowly than a watch on earth, or a man orbiting the earth in the same spaceship getting younger compared to his twin brother on earth.

In this context, Einstein gleefully declares that "Here is a paradox beyond even the imagination of Dean Swift" (quoted in Carey 1995, 270). The paradox Einstein refers to is the reciprocity of distortion in the physical appearance of two people of which one is travelling at extremely high speed. His argument is the following: to a man who is travelling at approximately light speed, another man who is at rest appears strongly distorted. On the other hand, the man in extremely fast motion appears equally distorted to the man at rest. Neither of the two, if asked by someone, is aware of the fact that he appears distorted in the eyes of the other, because when they look into mirrors that are motionless relative to themselves, each of them perceives his appearance to be entirely customary.

As has been shown, Swift similarly plays with mirror imagery and the notion of distorted perception. However, the distortion introduced in *Gulliver's Travels* by the eighteenth-century satirist is, unlike the one described by the twentieth-century scientist, non-reciprocal. This prompts Einstein's triumphant remark:

> Gulliver regarded the Lilliputians as a race of dwarfs; and the Lilliputians regarded Gulliver as a giant. That is natural. If the Lilliputians had appeared dwarfs to Gulliver, and Gulliver had appeared dwarf to the Lilliputians – but no! that is too absurd for fiction and is an idea only to be found in the sober pages of science.
> (quoted in Carey 1995, 270)

This is a neat, albeit somewhat late, rejoinder to Swift's various onslaughts on the achievements and aspirations of natural science and experimental philosophy, which, yet, would no doubt have failed to challenge Swift's views about the uselessness of scientific speculation beyond the common-sensical, had it been made by one of his contemporaries.[69] Notwithstanding, Swift would have had to admit that Einstein's argument is adroit, for it beats, or at least yields an eloquent retort to Swift in his own rather unfair terms of changing the opponent's imagery according to one's own taste and aims and leading it to a new paradox for him to chew on. We have seen this in the context of Swift's use of Hobbes's Leviathan metaphor and generally in the programmatic imagery of *A Tale of a Tub*; the strategy Einstein adopts is thus indeed very Swiftian.

Why did Einstein make reference to Swift? First, he had the opportunity to draw on Swift's well-known imagery in *Gulliver's Travels*, thus a welcome

[69] Swift eagerly read the publications of the Dublin Philosophical Society and the Royal Society in London to seek inspiration and targets for his satires. It is equally well-known that some of the experiments described in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society were absurd and grotesque, not only for Swift and some of his contemporaries but also for today's readers. These were popular sources of satire.

occasion to demonstrate that scientific theories could be even more fascinating and stimulating for the imagination than the most fantastic work of fiction. Second, of course, there was Swift's frequent criticism of science in his satires, and Einstein took the occasion to give Swift a refined payback in his own manner. Many Moderns and scientists among Swift's victims were not able to do so. In this context, Affentranger, who discusses the legitimacy of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century satire to criticize and attack science, contends that

> the satirist can claim no epistemological superiority over the scientist; for any attack on science based on its alleged absurdity is only a dressed-up appeal to some sort of standard methodology or to common sense. But commonsense, as we have seen, is no reliable yardstick for the assessment of the scientist's claim. (33)

Common sense is not of much help to understand or accept Einstein's theory of relativity. It is no useful tool. On the contrary, it is specifically against our habitual way of thinking, or, in other words, common sense, that a man should become younger relative to his twin brother on earth when orbiting our planet; and the same applies to Einstein's other examples to popularly explain his theory.

However, such argument exactly embodies an attitude, common with scientists, which Swift attacks in his satires. There is a confident self-centredness in science that completely relies on the tools and means of measurement developed and applied in its own realms. Hence, it runs the risk of neglecting or simply not accepting ideas and arguments from other domains of human intellectual activity and experience, such as philosophy, ethics or religion. The vision thus becomes one-sided, partial and distorted to the same effect as a look in one of Swift's Tubbian looking glasses. Moreover, if we were to ask Swift to describe such a Tubbian state of misapplication and disorientation, he would probably answer just about as follows:

> *Wit, without knowledge, being a Sort of Cream, which gathers in a Night to the Top, and by a skilful Hand, may be soon whipt into Froth; but once scumm'd away, what appears underneath will be fit for nothing, but to be thrown to the Hogs*. (*Battle* 375)

The scientist claims that there is no discourse outside scientific discourse, that neither any other standard methodology nor common sense are applicable in this realm; the religious or philosophical thinker insists on the same universal value of his notions. If these positions are strongly held, the systems completely exclude each other and thus deny each other's values and existence. "What great technological chances and improvements will be missed if we are not allowed, by authorities who are little competent to judge our activities and merits, to conduct our scientific studies and experiments for the common good?" This is the question the scientist poses. "If neither common sense nor

philosophy, ethics or faith are reliable yardsticks for the assessment of science, what will happen if we completely leave science to its own yardsticks?" This is the basic question behind Swift's criticism of science. It seems the two systems are not very likely to meet. Their conflict remains, as in the end so often in Swift's satires, unresolved and no doubt to be continued.[70] Still, we need to remember, in this context, that knowledge for Swift was basically what had been transferred from Ancient philosophy, as well as principally an awareness, based on faith, that man's reason and intellectual reach is limited.

With this in mind, let us now turn to Swift's satiric picture of scientific aberrations in Book III. On his third Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Glubbdubbdrib, Luggnagg, and Japan, Gulliver comes across the inhabitants of a flying island; and, upon first meeting them, he describes this strange species as follows:

> Their Heads were all reclined to the Right, or the Left; one of their Eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the Zenith. Their outward Garments were adorned with the Figures of Suns, Moons, and Stars, interwoven with those of Fiddles, Flutes, Harps, Trumpets, Harpsichords, and many more Instruments of Musick, unknown to us in *Europe*. I observed here and there many in the Habit of Servants, with a blown Bladder fastned like a Flail to the End of a short Stick, which they carried in their Hands. […] With these Bladders they now and then flapped the Mouths and Ears of those who stood near them, of which Practice I could not then conceive the Meaning. It seems the Minds of these People are so taken up with intense Speculations, that they neither can speak, nor attend to the Discourses of others, without being rouzed by some external Taction upon the Organs of Speech and Hearing. (*GT* 154)

This passage makes it very clear that Swift intended the inhabitants of Laputa to represent satirically philosophers and scientists, having a purely theoretical approach to all matters, given to and entirely occupied with abstract sciences such as astronomy, mathematics and musical theory.[71] The Laputians are utterly absorbed in their studies to such an extent as to make regular communication with them impossible: a servant, acting as a so-called "flapper," has the task of getting their attention and thus of reminding them of

[70] Although recently there has been a gradually growing realization that it is necessary to include philosophical or ethical notions and values in the development and application of new scientific methods and possibilities such as, say, genetic engineering, the process is far from complete. In addition, it appears to be the very nature of the conflict to make it appear likely there will never be an end to it.

[71] As has been frequently noted, the character and name of their flying island itself implies derivation from a natural state. The sheer fact of floating or hovering over the realms of practical use as well as the name's derivation from Spanish *la puta*, "the whore," suggests their aberration from a natural condition. It is, by the way, highly ironic that Gulliver, otherwise so proud of his linguistic skills, is totally blind to this obvious ethymology.

the world outside (or below), in case somebody wants to speak to them, by "flapping" them on the mouth and ears. Swift's description of such extreme absorption and pensiveness is very powerful. In their fanatic preoccupation with their own subjective, abstract beliefs, theories and practices, the Laputians are described as having "one of their Eyes turned inward, and the other directly up to the Zenith."

Swift's attack on scientific and abstract experimentation in Book III is very similar to his condemnation of the same abuses in his *A Tale of a Tub*. Inwardness and abstraction are equally fundamental qualities of the Hack's Tubbian visions in the *Tale* as well as in Swift's criticism of the Moderns in *The Battle of the Books*. Hence, it may be stated that the rhetoric in Swift's satires on religious Dissent and fanaticism very much resembles his polemic attacks on learning and science, which allows Swift to satirically attack abuses of reason, the separation of mankind and common sense at a religious, philosophical, political and scientific level concurrently. By directing the eyes of Laputians inward and towards the stars, Swift makes a point in depicting such activities as useless, at least from a commonsensical, practical stance. What Swift intends to expose in passages like this is the arrogance of science which claims that there is no discourse outside its own, that scientific procedures and achievements can only be measured by their own standards and methodology, following their own tools, categories and abstract schemes. Such systems run the danger of constituting their own realities and forcing themselves on the outside world but cannot be questioned either from inside or outside. They are circular, proved to be true merely by their own standards. This is the Tubbian state.

Thus, and very typical of Swift's strategy of reader entrapment, every critic of Swift cannot help but feel himself included in the attack, being, too, quite Laputian in his concentration on Swift's work and equally given to his own thoughts, interpretations and abstractions. Let us be warned: everybody given to scientific, theoretical occupations runs great risk of neglecting practical matters, as the following telling description of Laputian architecture demonstrates:

> Their Houses are very ill built, the Walls bevil without one right Angle in any Apartment; and this Defect ariseth from the Contempt they bear for practical Geometry; which they despise as vulgar and mechanick [...] I have not seen a more clumsy, awkward, and unhandy People, nor so slow and perplexed in their Conceptions upon all other Subjects, except those of Mathematicks and Musick. [...] the whole Compass of their Thoughts and Mind, being shut up within the two forementioned Sciences.
> (*GT* 157/158)

Whoever occupies himself exclusively with theoretical, abstract matters, and pairs such activity with pride, contempt and scorn of practical things will inevitably and miserably fail as soon as he steps out of the happy realm of abstraction into the real world. Swift is very tongue-in-cheek here in describing

the Laputians' almost amiable clumsiness and great perplexity concerning all matters practical; however, he also emphasizes the inhabitants' dictatorial and repressive demand to always be in the right, thus representing science's claim of epistemological supremacy. Hence, Swift suggests that such scientific activity and abstraction excludes practical use and common sense, as poor Gulliver has to pitifully experience when he is provided with a new coat by a Laputian tailor, who took

> my Measure for a Suit of Cloths. [...] He first took my Altitude by a Quadrant, and then with Rule and Compasses, described the Dimensions and Out-Lines of my whole Body; all which he entered upon Paper, and in six Days brought my Cloths very ill made, and quite out of Shape [...]. (*GT* 156)

Swift even adds to this by mentioning the Laputians' fears of some cosmic disaster, such as the extinction of the sun, which would lead to the destruction of the earth. Laputians are constantly forced, by their fear, to calculate and recalculate the odds of such universal a catastrophe; so that the poor scientists "can neither sleep quietly in their Beds, nor have any Relish for the common Pleasures and Amusements of Life," let alone being disposed towards taking care of their immediate environment in the face of such cosmic dimensions and catastrophes. Alluding to Newtonian astronomy, Swift ridicules the fact that the Laputians' "first Question" "about the Sun's Health" takes a far more prominent place in their minds than the earth's or their own (*GT* 159).

As has been stated, Laputa is not only a critical metaphor for science; or, better, of abuses in science. Swift's flying island may also be looked upon as a representation of misuses in politics, presenting the image of abstracted and concentrated power in the hands of a political *élite*. This *élite* is placed in a very remote corner from any basic and practical human need, shown to be sanctioned and motivated by merely theoretical approaches and very much inclined to reckless experimentation. In his portrayal of the flying island, Swift attacks the despotism of such abstract statesmanship; and he makes a move here that is the reminiscent of his treatment of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) as mentioned in the discussion of *A Tale of a Tub*. Hobbes justifies the existence and necessity of a terrible commonwealth he calls the "Leviathan." According to Hobbes, such a commonwealth is artificially made by mankind (or, as in our case, by a political *élite*) to prevent men, who are, in a natural state termed *homo homini lupus*, inclined to destroying each other, because of limitless aggression and chaos. Hobbes's argument reads as follows:

> Art goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of Nature, man. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin, CIVITAS), which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which the

> sovereignty is an artificial soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body […]Lastly, the pacts and covenants, by which the parts of this body politic were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that fiat, or the Let us make man, pronounced by God in the Creation.
> (*Leviathan*, Introduction)

Man's art of creating abstract states and governments resembles God's act of the creation of man. Hence, man appoints himself to a godlike position by generating such a "body politic". In his claim of "Art" going "yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of Nature, man," Hobbes draws on Cartesian materialism. Hobbes creates a picture of the debased human individual which makes necessary the establishment of a greater order or commonwealth which guarantees a ruled state of affairs:

> THE final cause, end, or design of men (who naturally love liberty, and dominion over others) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, in which we see them live in Commonwealths, is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war which is necessarily consequent, as hath been shown, to the natural passions of men when there is no visible power to keep them in awe, and tie them by fear of punishment […]. (*Leviathan*, Part II, Chapter XVII)

Hobbes's Leviathan is thus the manmade abstracted and impenetrable governmental power of the Commonwealth with its giant proportions and terrible force, become necessary because of its function to rescue man from the natural state of passions and consequent aggressive chaos.

As in the *Tale*, Swift attacks such justification in his descriptions of Laputa. Swift perceives even more danger in a concentration of intangible power than in individual passion and thus intends to reverse Hobbes's justification of monstrous governmental power. Very sceptical of such abstract political and governmental power, Swift shows the dangers of losing contact with the essentially human. Such a theoretical and artificial system due to its very nature runs the risk of neglecting everything natural and hence the individuals it claims to protect. Swift shows us the remoteness and marked inhumanity of rule by political theory and the consequent opposition which this distance from everything human causes. As in his attack on scientific abuses, Swift thus points his finger at the dangers of abstraction. He shows such theoretical and thus unnatural government to be at odds with common sense, with all practical and relevant matters, and worst of all, itself a great threat to the individual, to mankind and all basic human needs, as the following description of the Laputians' "*Method of suppressing Insurrections*" (*GT* 160) shows:

> If any Town should engage in Rebellion or Mutiny, fall into violent Factions, or refuse to pay the usual Tribute; the King hath two Methods of reducing them to Obedience. The first and the mildest Course is by keeping the Island hovering over such a Town, and the Lands about it; whereby he can deprive them of the Benefit of the Sun and the Rain, and consequently afflict the Inhabitants with Death and Diseases. And if the Crime deserve it, they are at the same time pelted from above with great Stones, against which they have no Defence, but by creeping into Cellars or Caves, while the Roofs of their Houses are beaten to Pieces. But if they still continue obstinate, or offer to raise Insurrections, he proceeds to the last Remedy, by letting the Island drop directly upon their Heads, which makes a universal Destruction both of Houses and Men.
> (*GT* 164/165)

This is oppression in the most literal terms. Laputa is again seen as artificially floating in its sphere of theoretical abstraction high over the grounds of humanity, its actual subject provinces; it is depicted as being governed abstractly, theoretically, in Hobbes's "Artificiall" sense, and at times inclined to descending upon its subjects with the sole intention of violently forcing its rule on them, who are exploited and ruled tyrannically. All resistance is literally squashed by the island's perching its gigantic Leviathan weight upon the very same grounds this manmade monster is actually appointed to protect.

In the same context, Swift makes an overt allusion to the maltreatment of Ireland under English rule, metaphorically describing Irish resistance to the introduction of Wood's halfpence and his own role as champion and spokesman of the Irish cause in his famed *Drapier's Letters*:[72]

> Lindalino the second City in the Kingdom was the first his Majesty visited in his Progress. Three Days after his Departure, the Inhabitants, who had often complained of great Oppressions, shut the Town Gates, seized on the Governor, and with incredible Speed and Labour erected four large Towers, one at every Corner of the City (which is an exact Square) equal in Height to a strong pointed Rock that stands directly in the Center of the City. Upon the Top of each Tower, as well as upon the Rock, they fixed a great Loadstone, and in case their Design should fail, they had provided a vast Quantity of the most combustible Fewel, hoping to burst therewith the adamantine Bottom of the Island, if the Loadstone Project should miscarry. (*GT* 145)

[72] As a matter of fact, the allusion to the Wood's halfpence crisis 1722-1724 in *Gulliver's Travels* is so clear as to have made the first publishers omit this passage, for fear of government retaliation (Bowman/Piper 145).

Lindalino, "the second City of the Kingdom" representing Dublin, is shown to be utterly obstinate to English regulation, at least concerning this issue. Swift's very prominent role in the controversy, the composition of the *Drapier's Letters* (1724) which brought him the fame and acclaim of an Irish patriot, is wittily referred to as a "vast Quantity of the most combustible Fewel, hoping to burst therewith the adamantine Bottom of the Island," which it did, for finally the Laputian king "was forced to give the Town their own Conditions" (*GT* 146); the Irish got another coin.

William Wood's acquisition of the exclusive right to mint copper halfpence for circulation in Ireland aroused intense Irish opposition. Swift's *persona* of the Drapier "stirred up every class of Irishman" and subjected the Anglo-Irish relationship to shocking analysis (Williams 1939, 285). During the unfolding crisis, the Drapier became the most powerful spokesman of Irish rights, declaring that "by the laws of GOD, of NATURE, of NATIONS, and of your Country, you ARE, and OUGHT to be as FREE a people as your brethren in England" (*PW* X 80). This claim, of course, by far exceed the issue of Wood's patent, and, as Williams avers, it marked the beginning of a time when "the Irish people took more and more as their ultimate goal the ideal expressed first and once for all by Swift" (1939, 286). In the end, the Walpole government had grudgingly to accept the criticisms expressed there, withdrew the monopoly and pensioned off Wood. The arguments and the success of Swift's *Drapier's Letters* by far outlasted the actual controversy and gave Swift the reputation of a Hibernian patriot. Robert F. Foster suggests an image of Swift as a rather typical representative of Anglo-Irish ascendancy: Swift's career as patriotic pamphleteer "expresses the contradictory, vehement, intractably Protestant, but politically Anglophobic character of a uniquely Irish Tory tradition" (140). It can thus generally be stated that Swift's Irish patriotism generally went along the same lines as commonly with Protestant Anglo-Irish population: after considering themselves as "the English in Ireland," a growing sense of Irishness, in opposition to English suppression, gradually began to take over.

After having spent some time among the Laputians, Gulliver does not regret leaving the island, for, "being heartily weary of those People" he can not help remarking that he has "never met with such disagreeable Companions" (*GT* 166), an accurate judgement by Swift's otherwise gullible *persona*, at various other points "not without Truth" shown to be "a Person of much Curiosity and easy Belief" (*GT* 170). As he has to wait for an England-bound ship, he intends to make the best of the delay and accepts an invitation to pay a visit to the famous "Academy of PROJECTORS in Lagado." The much-famed academy was established by some people who had spent a rather short time (five months) in Laputa and thus had come back "with a very little Smattering in Mathematics, but full of Volatile Spirits acquired in that Airy Region". Thus equipped with what they deemed to be new knowledge, they expressed their dislike of just about every common use in the area "below" Laputa, and they "fell into Schemes of putting all Arts, Sciences, Languages, and Mechanics upon a new Foot" and in order to achieve this aim got a royal patent to establish an academy (*GT* 169). Allusion to the

Royal Society is more than overt: here again, Swift criticizes academic pride and arrogance.

Gulliver gives us a detailed account of this scientific institution and cannot help expressing his astonishment and wonder over the experiments he has the opportunity to observe, among which are such remarkable examples as "a Project for extracting Sun-Beams out of Cucumbers […] to warm the Air in raw inclement Summers" (*GT* 170), "an Operation to reduce human Excrement to its original Food" (*GT* 171), a project about "employing spiders" instead of silk-worms due to the fact that they "infinitely excelled the former, because they understood how to weave as well as spin" (*GT* 172), an experiment of "softening Marble for Pillows and Pincushions," or a scheme "to prevent the Growth of Wool upon two young Lambs" in the hope "in a reasonable Time to propagate the Breed of naked Sheep all over the Kingdom" (*GT* 173). Yet, the most memorable and telling account doubtlessly constitute the "Experiments upon a Dog" made by "a great Physician" at the academy:

> He had a large Pair of Bellows with a long slender Muzzle of Ivory. This he conveyed eight Inches up the Anus, and drawing in the Wind, he affirmed he could make the Guts as lank as a dried Bladder. But when the Disease was more stubborn and violent, he let in the Muzzle while the Bellows were full of Wind, which he discharged into the Body of the Patient, then withdrew the Instrument to replenish it […] I saw him try both Experiments upon a Dog, but could not discern any Effect from the former. After the latter, the Animal was ready to burst, and made so violent a Discharge, as was very offensive to me and my Companions. The Dog died on the Spot, and we left the Doctor endeavouring to recover him by the same Operation.
> (*GT* 172)

The cruelty and stupidity of this experiment even excels the meaninglessness and irrelevance of the projects mentioned before. Swift forces us to take indeed a very deep look at the science of his time, of natural sciences in their cradle. As has been noted, Swift, using the publications of the Royal Society, in many of his descriptions refers to experiments that were actually made or at least suggested by the scientists of his day. Gulliver continues his description, now turning to the academy's Arts and Sciences department, where he comes across the most remarkable device of a "Literary Engine":

> [B]y his Contrivance, the most ignorant Person at a reasonable Charge, and with a little bodily Labour, may write Books in Philosophy, Poetry, Politicks, Law, Mathematicks and Theology, without the least Assistance from Genius or Study. He then led me to the Frame, about the Sides whereof all his Pupils stood in Ranks. […] These

> bits of Wood were covered on every Square with Paper pasted on them, and on these Papers were written all the Words of their Language [...] The Pupils at his Command took each of them hold of an Iron Handle, whereof there were Forty fixed round the Edges of the Frame, and giving them a sudden turn, the whole Disposition of the Words was entirely changed. He then commanded six and thirty of the Lads to read the several Lines softly as they appeared upon the Frame; and where they found three or four Words together that might make part of a Sentence, they dictated to the four remaining Boys who were Scribes.
> (*GT* 175)

This is another example of the typically Tubbian substitution of intellectual activity with merely mechanical contrivance. In addition, it is an attack on materialism very similar to the *Tale*'s. Again, the Royal Society is in focus, which "extracted from its members a compact and unembellished way of speaking" (Clark 346). In his *History of the Royal Society* (1667), Thomas Sprat reports that the society decided "to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style: to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver'd so many *things*, almost in equal number of *words*" (113). In spite of the fact that such a plea for linguistic simplicity must have met with Swift's approval, the Royal Society's mechanical philosophy, in its emphasis on 'words' giving a grasp of 'things', does not escape Swift's mockery in the *Travels*.[73] In a Swiftian parody, the scholars of Lagado suggest that "since Words are only Names for *Things*, it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them, such *Things* as were necessary to express the particular Business they are to discourse on," leading to Gulliver's observation of "two of those Sages almost sinking under the Weight of their Packs" (*GT* 176). Thus, in this "burlesque of the theory that words and things are in one-to-one connection, the 'word' has become the 'thing' itself," constituting "a characteristic Swiftian satiric literalization" (Higgins 148) and thus one feature characteristic of his Tubbian strategy.

In similar manner as in the *Tale* or *A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, Swift delights in having his projectors invent abstruse physiological, mechanical schemes to attain eloquence or to explain exclusively intellectual processes by use of the terms, rules and jargon of mechanical (pseudo)scientific studies. At the end of his tour of the academy, Gulliver states that he "was but ill entertained; the Professors appearing in my Judgment wholly out of their Senses; which is a Scene that never fails to make me melancholy" (*GT* 177). Such a conclusion does not obviously require great "Judgment". The miserable failure of Laputian schemes becomes self-evident. Once more, what is proudly intended to be learned, exalted, spiritual, witty, becomes by Swift's Tubbian satiric deflation ignorant, debased, physical, wooden.

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[73] As Hunter notes, Sprat's *History* is a useful document of an attempt at defining and defending the role of science in mid-seventeenth-century England, although expressing "as much a confession of faith as a factual record" (29).

Ultimate Entrapment: Gulliver's Fourth Voyage

> For I do not run off like a child after the golden apples, but stake all on the victory of art over nature.[74]

Reading Swift in search of authorial propositions leads to losing oneself in the Tub's paradox. It is highly problematic to declare seemingly positive elements in Swift's satire to be in fact what Swift himself intended to be the norms underlying his assaults. This problematic context makes it impossible to rely on any expressed values. In *Gulliver's* Travels, seemingly positive glimpses or suggestions might be provided by very few examples. Lord Munodi, a publicly despised and exiled conservative landowner, who has fallen from public grace because he lives retired off his land, does not follow the new fashions, scientific experiments and architectural innovations of Balnibarbi, but possesses thriving well-kept estates is one (Book III). Another is Captain Mendez, "a very courteous and generous Person" (*GT* 258), who seems to embody simple honesty and sincere humanity (Book IV). However, as with all characters and notions depicted in Swift's satires, attempts to separate them from their satiric context and function is tricky, for their position appears a great deal weakened by the complexity of satiric perspectives Swift offers and through which Gulliver, and perhaps at times also the equally gullible reader, is forced to perceive things.

Neither the negativity of satire nor the occasional positive elements (if there be any to be discerned) may be considered separately; and a Swiftian value system on its own terms thus cannot be constructed. On the contrary, as I have been trying to demonstrate, Swift's satire is mainly strategic, aiming at the entrapment of its readers. Therefore, such satiric elements, assaults, visions, games, puns, apparent relieves etc. must be studied in the context of their satiric function. They are checked, balanced or, as is most often the case, made even more emphatic and severe and confusing by other elements found in their neighbourhood. Any other reading of satire would mean expecting Swift to directly and explicitly teach his readers, giving answers to the questions he poses. Such instructions can hardly be found anywhere in Swift's writing. It is no coincidence that Swift is so fond of using fakes, such as fantastic travel accounts, fictive reports, mock-scientific projects, pseudo-treatises produced in Grub Street, only to name some of Swift's repertoire. All these have one common goal: to confuse, to make his readers dizzy, to demonstrate how weak and wavering human reason is and how difficult judgement appears in the face of such abundant error, hypocrisy and deceit. In the struggle to decode Swift's satire, the reader is forced to find out how he has been gulled and why. Stable borders between

[74] Bacon, Francis. *The New Organon* (1620). *The Works of Francis Bacon.* vol. 4. Eds. Spedding, James, R. L. Ellis and D. D. Heath. (London: 1860) Faksimile-Neudruck der Ausgabe in Vierzehn Bänden. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag Günther Holzboog, 1962, I; 117; 105.

right and wrong, "deceiving accounts and accounts of deceit" (Schmidt 1977, 115), seem to evaporate: there is nothing that can be regarded independent and free of assaults by other elements: one assault may well include others. Once caught in Swift's satiric net, there is no easy way out, especially not by the means and tools of reasoning Swift directly offers.

I have revisited the way I read Swift's satire because I think it is of particular relevance in the context of Gulliver's fourth voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms. This part of the *Travels* has tempted many, especially among Swift's earlier readers and critics, to consider it some kind of Swiftian utopia or final ideal offered fittingly at the end of his satire. Yet, the question of the viability of the Houyhnhnms, of their offering a utopian or distopian model of society, which used to divide interpretative scholarship into "soft" and "hard" school readings of Book IV, nowadays seems rather dated.[75] Moreover, in the light of my present approach to Swift focused on reader entrapment, looking upon Gulliver's fourth voyage as offering Swift's ultimate utopia does not appreciate the basic Tubbian nature of Swift's satire and strategy.

For in Swift, any reading of satire which attempts to isolate apparent ideals and norms is shattered by the fact that such seemingly stable and secure categories may very easily be drawn into further satiric circles. Hence, I will maintain the image of Swift the master entrapper: in Swift's satiric mirror, the reader sees Gulliver equating himself with the Yahoos and perceiving the Houyhnhnms as ideal. The Swiftian trap again consists of the effect on the reader Swift intends to achieve by this distorted satiric perspective, provided by his *persona*, as wells as on the satiric hyperbolic options it offers. This is the Tubbian situation of interest here, the trap prepared for the reader on Gulliver's last journey. As has been shown, in the first two voyages, Swift describes Gulliver's confusion in terms of size and proportion, intending to confuse the reader along with his *persona*. Gulliver is struggling, and far from managing, to find his place between the extremes of gigantic and minute; this comparison and consequent search happens first on a basic physical level, but equally importantly on a mental level of morality and character, too. This time, among the Yahoos and Houyhnhnms, Gulliver undergoes the same experience, but in terms of two other extremes, the wholly rational and the merely physical. We here find, of course, another Swiftian trap, comparable to the fool or knave dilemma in the *Tale* in offering two unattractive choices.

The crucial fact about reader entrapment in the Yahoo-Houyhnhm dilemma is that like Gulliver the reader unavoidably detects traces of himself in both the Yahoos and the Houyhnhnms, thus finding himself in a fix to determine his position or make an assessment of his personal, human, nature. It is obvious that the crude Yahoos do not represent a fit or even feasible alternative. As we know, Gulliver abhors the Yahoos, and hence makes a choice to try to be like the Houyhnhnms. This choice leads to disaster, to Swift's final destruction of his satiric *persona* dummy. Swift at least tells us openly

[75] For a summary of the debate, see Clifford, James L. "Gulliver's Fourth Voyage. 'Hard' and 'Soft' Schools of Interpretation." Ed. Larry S. Champion. *Quick Springs of Sense. Studies in the Eighteenth Century*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974, 33-49.

what choice we should not make. Yet, how then should we decide? Swift's silence is the only answer we get, as usual in Tubbian situations.

Unsurprisingly, the way readers have considered the two choices over the centuries shows us that Swift was in fact far from offering us a simple solution, reason triumphant, or anything the like. Summarizing, it may be stated that readers of Book IV tended to hate the Yahoos and dislike the Houyhnhnms. Is this anything other than a typical reaction to satire of the Swiftian kind? Swift offers no relief from his satiric trap. In the end, this is what he intended. The description of the noble horses in Gulliver's eyes as exalted ideals of reason devises his last and cruellest trap, intending to draw miserable Gulliver towards his final state of utter alienation of everything that is human. The reader is drawn into entrapment, too, but unlike Gulliver, he at least has a chance to leave the Tub.

Until the point where he sets sail on his last journey, Gulliver has been forced to experience everything shameful humanity could offer; he has been dragged through the countries of dwarfs and giants, perceiving his own proportion to be always unfit for his environment; he has travelled though the mazes of deceitful political schemes, the greed and recklessness of princes and monarchs, the arrogant and perverse ambitions of all kinds of sciences and pseudo-sciences, he has met with an abundant number of landscapes and pits of human error, of perverted reason. Everything has seemed so strange on these travels to remote nations of the world, but it has always become quite clear to the reader (if not to Gulliver) that the strange customs of remote countries actually describe very familiar, even personal and intimate problems in a satirical light. Swift's, and to a more general extent, our familiar world has been made strange through satiric vision. And what awaits Gulliver in the country of the Houyhnhnms is nothing but the finishing touch.

Slavery and "A Certain Wonderful Yahoo (Meaning Myself)"

> Because he thought, Nature and Reason were sufficient Guides for a reasonable Animal, as we pretended to be, in shewing us what we ought to do, and what to avoid. (*GT* 227)

On his fourth voyage, Gulliver falls victim to a mutiny. His crew, mainly an assembly of felons (most of them have been buccaneers, as Gulliver later finds out) sets him ashore on an unknown land. It is notable that in each of Gulliver's voyages, the circumstances which bring him to adventurous places exhibit an increasing degree of human failure, crime and wickedness: in Book I, mistakes in navigation lead to his being shipwrecked and having to swim ashore; in Book II, he is left on the beach by his comrades when they are threatened by an inhabitant; in Book III his ship is attacked and taken over by pirates and he is set adrift on a boat. Finally, the mutiny in Book IV constitutes nothing but the worst crime at sea.

Swift's description of maritime crimes also brings us to the context of colonial crime and the criticisms of such as brought up in Gulliver's fourth voyage. In Gulliver's fourth voyage, Swift explicitly confronts the arrogant and preposterous claims behind the practice of civilized nations (technologically advanced countries of Europe, that is) to conquer savage people overseas. Here is a telling summary of the common way of establishing or planting new colonies:

> A Crew of Pyrates are driven by a Storm they know not whither; at length a boy discovers Land from the Top-mast; they go on Shore to rob and plunder; they see an harmless People, are entertained with Kindness, they give the Country a new Name, they take formal Possession of it for their King, they set up a rotten Plank or a Stone for a Memorial, they murder two or three Dozen of the Natives, bring away a Couple more by Force for a Sample, return Home, and get their Pardon. Here commences a new Dominion acquired with a Title by *Divine Right*. Ships are sent with the first Opportunity, the Natives driven out or destroyed, their Princes tortured to discover their Gold; a free Licence given to all Acts of Inhumanity and Lust, the Earth reeking with the Blood of its Inhabitants: And this execrable Crew of Butchers employed in so pious an Expedition, is a *modern Colony* sent to convert and civilize an idolatrous and barbarous People. (*GT* 265)

Of course it is Gulliver who gives this account, and statements by Swift's *persona* ought not be taken at face value. Still, this seems to be one of the rare occasions in Swift, where Gulliver is actually instrumentalized as Swift's

spokesman. Swift's description of inhuman cruelty, godless exploitation in the name of "*Divine Right*," as well as the picture of slavery ("bring away a Couple more by Force for a Sample") naturally evokes feelings of shame and an intuitive turning to human ideals of liberty and mankind's right of freedom.

Interestingly, in the context of reader entrapment, John Richardson, who in his study on notions of slavery in Augustan literature also focuses on Gulliver's forth voyage, notes that images "of confinement and of subjection occupy a central place in *Gulliver's Travels*, and imply a desire for freedom" (138). Yet, such desire and anti-colonial sentiment as expressed in the passage above are totally at odds with descriptions of the Yahoos, which are in correspondence with other common notions about slavery in Swift's time, claiming that subjection and slavery is a deserved and to a certain extent self-imposed predicament. Hence, Richardson discerns an "ironic, at times, contradictory, intensity" concerning the notion of slavery or entrapment in *Gulliver's Travels*, expressing another Swiftian paradox:

> There is […] frustration in the treatment of freedom and slavery […] Among those are a belief in freedom as the proper and virtuous condition to which all men should aspire, and a simultaneous conception of nearly all men […] as too degenerate to deserve it. Similarly, in *Gulliver's Travels*, there is a strong emphasis on the desirability of freedom in some of the generally political passages and in many of Gulliver's predicaments. At the same time, the powerful image of 'slavish' Yahoo/humans implies that people do not deserve freedom and are unfitted for it. (138)

In other words, slaves are slaves, because they are slavish; Yahoos are treated as brutish animals only good to perform heavy physical work, because this is what they are and deserve. Yahoos "are both barbarous and fitted for slavery" (140). As Richardson states, such notions were widespread in Swift's time and at odds with predominant ideas and ideals of mankind's natural desire and right to freedom. Yet, as may be argued, they can be convincingly linked to ancient Christian notions of the body Swift might have sympathized with:

> A peculiarity of the shifting relations of master and slave in *Gulliver's Travels* is that they so often depend on shape. […] [S]lave and master, exile and slave, captive and captor are distinguishable by their appearance. It is the size or shape of the body which tells them apart; and I suspect that Swift is drawing on an old, symbolic paradox, that the body is regrettably the master (or warden, or conqueror) of the rational soul which should be its lord. […] The motif of liberty and slavery has the same resonance, e.g., in the epistles of Peter: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are servants of

> corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (2 Pet. ii. 19) Ultimately, all men are jailed not only on their islands of racial culture but in the sensuality and corruption of their flesh." (Ehrenpreis III 471)

In addition to notions of mankind's physical slavery, Swift's description of the Yahoos must have evoked ideas and stereotypes of primitive non-European people in Swift's contemporary readers and, along with those, existent, real uncertainties whether those savage people were real humans or not. This effect, as will be shown, is still observable with many readers today, but not in colonial and racist contexts. Hence, Swift's invention and image of the Yahoos directly addresses critical questions about colonialization in his time and exposes the inherent paradox in notions of slavery as well as in "Britain's early eighteenth-century libertarian slave society" (Richardson 145). What is more, this paradox is used on a mental plane for reader entrapment:

> The repetitive emphasis on images of confinement contributes towards the text's anxious vision of a world pervaded by power and in which relationships are perceived in terms of mastery and subjection. An important part of that anxiety concerns psychological influence, and what might be called the mental confinement which results from it. (138/139)

In this context of colonial criticism and paradox inherent in common contemporary ideas of savage nations and slavery, it is only logical that Gulliver passes from the hands of maritime criminals to an encounter with these strange, offensive, human-like animals, later to be named Yahoos, themselves embodying such paradox. When Gulliver first meets the Yahoos, he is immediately repelled by their appearance and nature:

> Their shape was very singular, and deformed, which a little discomposed me, so that I lay down behind a Thicket to observe them better. […] Their Heads and Breasts were covered with a thick Hair, some frizzled and others lank; they had Beards like Goats, and a long Ridge of Hair down their Backs, and the fore Parts of their Legs and Feet; but the rest of their Bodies were bare, so that I might see their Skins, which were of a brown Buff Colour. […] [They] often stood on their hind Feet. […] The Hair of both Sexes was of several Colours, brown, red, black and yellow. Upon the whole, I never beheld in all my Travels so disagreeable an Animal, or one against which I naturally conceived so strong an Antipathy. So that thinking I had seen enough, full of Contempt and Aversion, I got up and pursued the beaten Road […]. (GT 207)

There is in fact intimation in this passage that these strange animals are rather human in appearance. Hence, the alert reader gets an uneasy feeling as early as this when Gulliver expresses his deep-felt distaste of the Yahoos' physique upon first encountering them, for he feels and anticipates his shared nature with the Yahoos. Moreover, there is colonial criticism in Gulliver's scornful descriptions of forms which seem human.

The negative feeling gets stronger and stronger the more Gulliver sees and learns about the Yahoos. Gulliver reveals himself to be deeply disturbed when at last certain of the close physical resemblance between himself and the "detestable animals": "My Horror and Astonishment are not to be described, when I observed, in this abominable Animal, a perfect human Figure" (*GT* 212).

Gulliver's original aversion is purely based on the animals' physical form. Shamefully he has to experience the crude physicality the Yahoos represent when

> a Herd of at least forty came flocking about me from the next Field, howling and making odious Faces; but I ran to the Body of a Tree, and leaning my Back against it, kept them off; by waving my Hanger. Several of this cursed Brood getting hold of the Branches behind, leaped up into the Tree, from whence they began to discharge their Excrements on my Head: However, I escaped pretty well by sticking close to the Stem of the Tree, but was almost stifled with the Filth, which fell about me on every Side.
> (*GT* 208)

Swift is using, as he has done before, basic bodily functions as a satiric means to demonstrate debasement. Gulliver – and the reader? – is literally almost "stifled with the Filth" Swift creates in this vision. We are reminded of Swift's use of such hyperbolic, scatological imagery in *A Tale of a Tub*, intended to shock the reader, in "the Midst of this Distress" (*GT* 208), into satiric awareness that the uncouth Yahoos on the tree are indeed a picture of man at his most physical, an image of mankind's basic animal predicament, as "savage" people encountered on colonial exploits and missions, so much criticized by Swift, were considered. As far as Gulliver is concerned, the shock runs deep: "For as to those filthy Yahoos, although there were few greater Lovers of Mankind, at that time, than myself; yet I confess I never saw any sensitive Being so detestable on all Accounts" (*GT* 213). The reader is equally entrapped in this merging of satiric physical defamiliarization and commonplace stereotypes of savage people of Swift's time. The crisis of identification Swift intended to build for his contemporary readers indeed has not lost its intensity.

It is no coincidence that Swift has the Houyhnhnms rescue Gulliver from this highly unpleasant situation. Rescue, or so it seems. When Gulliver meets the first two representatives of that splendid species and observes their rational and gentle conduct, he is first "amazed to see such Actions and Behaviour in Brute Beasts" (*GT* 208/209) and then very quickly drawn to the conclusion that they "must needs be Magicians, who had thus

metamorphosed themselves upon some Design; and seeing a Stranger in the Way, were resolved to divert themselves with him" (*GT* 209). As Dyson notes, Swift's technique is very clever, for the Houyhnhnms "are only sketched in" (62). This cleverly leads the way to the cruellest trap in Swift. The detestable Yahoos have been described in so much unpleasant detail; hence the clean, gentle and, most of all, rational, horses stand in stark contrast to them and obviously seem to represent their positive counterparts. However, clearly, Gulliver is not at ease in this company, either:

> I resolved to go forward until I could discover some House or a Village, or meet with any of the Natives; leaving the two Horses to discourse together as they pleased. But the first, who was a Dapple-Grey, observing me to steal off, neighed after me in so expressive a Tone, that I fancied myself to understand what he meant; whereupon I turned back, and came near him, to expect his farther Commands; but concealing my Fear as much as I could; for I began to be in some Pain, how this Adventure might terminate; and the Reader will easily believe I did not much like my present Situation. (*GT* 209)

If we compare Swift's wonderful horses and their appearance to the filthy Yahoos, they are, in contrast, obviously anything but human. Yet, they behave marvellously rationally, as Gulliver observes. It has been frequently noted that this is a Swiftian joke on the tropes, truisms and formulas he had come across at Trinity College: From the textbook *Institutiones logicae* by Narcissus Marsh, Provost of Trinity and later Archbishop of Dublin, we find such syllogistic configurations as:

> *homo est animal rationale*
> *nullus equus est rationale*
> *solum animal rationale est disciplinae capax*.[76]

Following this logic, Gulliver is at a complete loss to classify the horses he has met, which constitutes an implied joke not only on this kind of syllogistic reasoning, but also a sneer at human reason in general. Gulliver's first reaction to this paradox is to try to explain it away by speculating about some incredibly gifted owners that could teach mere horses such conduct. He is convinced of the impossibility that such animals could be reasoning and he assumes that the exhibition of such reasonaed conduct could only be parrot-like imitation of the reason their teachers or trainers call their own.

Ironically, this is exactly the way the Houyhnhnms consider Gulliver himself in the following. Gulliver is bound to note that the Houyhnhnms look "upon it as a Prodigy, that a brute Animal [i.e. Gulliver] should discover such Marks of a rational Creature" (*GT* 215). They consider themselves to be "*the Perfection of Nature*" (*GT* 216), which is what their very name, Houyhnhnm,

[76] cf. *Institutiones logicae*. (1681) pp. 116, 185, sig. A5; pp. 175, 42 (quoted in Nokes 12).

means in their own neighing language. Although Gulliver admires the horses' demeanour, he feels at first uncomfortable as their captive. Swift is, of course, firmly embedded here in the tradition of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), "shaming Europeans with the moral accomplishments of pagans" (Ehrenpreis III 458).[77] Nonetheless, when attempting to escape, Gulliver immediately obeys the command of one of the horses to stay. Swift's description of Gulliver's response is indeed most memorable and may be taken as his private joke on the general human capacity of understanding the "words of reason": Gulliver fancies that he himself is able to understand the meaning of what the rational horse is lecturing him on, and then struggles back to expect its farther commands. Yet, it is obvious enough that in fact he does not or could not possibly understand one single syllable of what the wise horse has to tell him. Gulliver is now the Houyhnhnms' captive. He is the guest, object of wonder and study, as well as prisoner of these horses of reason, and his first intuitive reaction to this is a feeling of fear and uneasiness.

Poor Gulliver is indeed quite out of place and range among the Houyhnhnms. Swift is about to make his readers see what an *animal rationale* is really like. This is Swift's insult, so hard to digest for generations of readers. As Claude Rawson states in his study on barbarism and the European imagination, "While the Houyhnhnms are an insulting impossibility, the Yahoos are an equally insulting possibility" (2001, 32). Insult being the operative word, for this is Swift's aim in this satiric pair of extremes intended for the effect of reader entrapment. Richardson graphically summarizes Swift's provocation:

> Here are the most disgusting creatures I can think of, he [i.e. Swift] seems to say – you are like them. It is amusing to imagine their extermination, he suggests, or a programme of mass castration for them – amusing to think those things of you too. They deserve, he demonstrates, to be kept in kennels and made to serve nobler creatures – so do you. (143)

This is reader entrapment at its harshest, classifiable as "overspill" of Swiftian satire. As Rawson suggests, there are characteristic moments in Swift "which overspill their official (didactic or discursive) purposes" (1983, 58) and there is a repeated element in Swift expressing "an imagination playfully fascinated by the violent and the unspeakable, and willing to enter this territory beyond all obvious objectives of satirizing cruelty" (2001, 5). The reader is entrapped in the paradox of the vilely physical Yahoos who by their very unteachable nature seem to deserve their status as oppressed and enslaved, animal-like humans, and the far remote possibility of the Houyhnhnms, which is explicitly shown to be no feasible human option by their being free, ideal-like non-humans. As Higgins states, the *Travels*' "image of a human state of nature is

[77] Yet, it must be stated that it is equally hard to hold that More, devout Catholic and generally intolerant of heretics, would have accepted various Utopian states and practices such as their religion (belief in a Supreme Being), religious tolerance, the legality of divorce, etc. (Carey 1998, 38). Thus, *Utopia* seems to have been intended to be as strategic as Houyhnhnm Land.

the brutish, violent anarchy of the anthropoid Yahoos – a mythic version of a Hobbesian state of nature," whereas the "idyllic order of those equine Ancients, the Houyhnhnms, is unattainable" (196).

However, it remains to be argued that Swift's strategy of reader entrapment would not be Tubbian if the Houyhnhnms were unquestionable ideals; for indeed not at all unlike European colonialists, criticized by Swift, the Houyhnhnms exhibit an intense interest in Gulliver the savage, Gulliver the Yahoo, brought "by Force" and as "a Sample" for study and scorn to their abode. Gulliver's host Houyhnhnm, whom he admiringly calls his master, takes a special interest in questioning and advising Gulliver:

> He was extremely curious to know from what Part of the Country I came, and how I was taught to imitate a rational Creature, because the Yahoos, (whom he saw I exactly resembled in my Head, Hands and Face, that were only visible,) with some Appearance of Cunning, and the strongest Disposition to Mischief, were observed to be the most unteachable of all Brutes. (*GT* 216)

As has been mentioned above, Swift leaves no doubt from the beginning that Gulliver may be a Yahoo, but absolutely cannot be a horse. This is the first shock Gulliver, and the reader, is bound to receive. Gulliver, at least, is quite shaken by the idea. Gulliver's master is very clear about his observation that his physical appearance evidently places Gulliver among the Yahoos. This is a fact which even his desperate and ridiculous attempts to hide his body under his clothes and to thus keep up the appearance of some significant difference between himself and the Yahoos are not able to hide for long. For he is soon found out, prompting his master's comment that "he could not understand why Nature should teach us to conceal what Nature had given" and he then states that "neither himself nor his Family were ashamed of any Parts of their Bodies" (*GT* 218). In the following, his master's teachings make Gulliver lose all self-respect: to Gulliver's devastation, the noble Houyhnhnm does not in the least respect the "Glimmerings of Reason" (*GT* 217) he exhibits, which, after all, Gulliver's "false" clothes very neatly represent, and he considers him to be merely a rather special representative of the Yahoo species, endowed with a skill at imitating reasonable beings.

Hence, the Houyhnhnms would not even understand Swift's own famed classification of mankind as *animal rationis capax*, as Walsh cannot help announcing in a rather delighted way: "The Houyhnhnms, who had no mysteries, could never have understood this point" (2003, 167). The Houyhnhnms' judgement puts Gulliver automatically in his "deserved" position of subjection, for such, as Richardson argues, "though an evil in itself, is right for the Yahoos, while freedom, though good, is not for them." This is paradoxical entrapment provided by the Swiftian extreme of the Yahoos, "an impasse" "quite characteristic of the way in which the imagination of the fourth voyage works" (145). In addition, Swift's own classification of mankind as well as his general defence of Christian mysteries against irreverent reasoning in his

religious writings further removes the purely rational Houyhnhnms from the position of untouchable ideals.

As if this were not enough, his master agrees that Gulliver is not quite like the Yahoos he has seen before, but that these differences are even to his disadvantage concerning his ability to survive as an animal:

> He said, I differed indeed from other Yahoos, being much more cleanly, and not altogether so deformed; but in point of real Advantage, he thought I differed for the worse. That my Nails were of no Use either to my fore or hinder Feet: As to my fore Feet, he could not properly call them by that Name, for he never observed me walk upon them; that they were too soft to bear the Ground […] That I could not walk with any Security; for if either of my hinder Feet slipped, I must inevitably fall. He then began to find fault with other Parts of my Body […]. (*GT* 221/222)

To be denied his claim to be truly rational, to be classified as a Yahoo and even as such criticized concerning his bodily aptness in nature is hard enough for Gulliver, but he is to receive an even more shattering blow. In fact, during his stay in the land of the Houyhnhnms, its most dignified inhabitants create a picture of himself in poor Gulliver's mind which becomes progressively more disturbing and disgusting. As Gulliver states, his master "daily convinced me of a thousand Faults in my self, whereof I had not the least Perception before" (*GT* 234). The Houyhnhnms rank him among the Yahoos according to his bodily form; they even make him accept and believe in some deep-rooted moral resemblance, a kindred of genuine nature and character. As if this were not enough: his master finally claims, after having received Gulliver's account of England and Europe, their societies, politics, and warfare, that also in this respect, Gulliver is actually worse than any Yahoo he has known, for his breed uses the "Rudiments of Reason" (*GT* 233) they possess to satisfy and multiply their crude Yahoo needs:

> [H]e looked upon us as a Sort of Animals to whose Share, by what Accident he could not conjecture, some small Pittance of *Reason* had fallen, whereof we made no other Use than by its Assistance to aggravate our *natural* Corruptions, and to acquire new ones which Nature had not given us. That, we […] had been very successful in multiplying our original Wants, and seemed to spend our whole Lives in vain Endeavours to supply them by our own Inventions. (*GT* 235)

Thus, in his master's view, Gulliver's "tincture of reason" is a deceit, a fake. What appears to be some sort of reason in him is no more than unsuccessful, empty and a vain imitation which actually makes him rank lower in scale, even more debased, than the Yahoos. The satiric attack seems to be quite clear here: human abuse of reason leads to multiple vices. At this stage, the reader

seems to be allowed to feel rather positive about where satire is directed: the Houyhnhnms are ideal entities, teaching Gulliver his lesson. The noble horses' point of view is the ideal against which our human vices are measured. And, of course, this ideal is in fact beyond our reach.

Yet, are things indeed as simple as this? Once again, and in a way similar to *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift's satiric attack is much more overwhelming: his description of the Yahoos' deficient character and nature also employs a more general attack on the human body and form, an attack that cannot be justified by any satiric goal. What is cruelly attacked here is human nature at its most basic, with no prospect of healing, as also suggested by the Yahoos' utter unteachability. Another of Gulliver's Houyhnhnm master's speeches includes a telling instance of such satiric "overspill," where Swift attacks to wound, not to heal:

> He said, the Yahoos were known to hate one another more than they did any different Species of Animals; and the Reason usually assigned, was, the Odiousness of their own Shapes, which all could see in the rest, but not in themselves. He had therefore begun to think it not unwise in us to *cover* our Bodies, and by that Invention, conceal many of our deformities from each other, which would else be hardly supportable. (*236*)

This passage could be read metaphorically, even though this constitutes a technique Swift makes so much fun of in his *Tale*. Thus, even if I risk Swift's sneer: Men clothe or adorn themselves with the traces of reason they have been able to acquire in order to hide their true nature, which is not moral, reasonable or spiritual, but debased, instinctive and physical. Such attempts to keep up appearances cannot conceal the fact that in the end men are animals rather than spiritual beings. This would be the part of satire that includes direct attack against human pride and pretences at true reason.

However, what happens if we read the passage literally? Again, in this case the attack is directed against something unchangeable, something that cannot be morally improved: the human body. As Carol H. Flynn points out, "By insisting upon a deformation undetected by Gulliver in Lilliput to be impossible for Gulliver in Bobdingnag to avoid falling into, Swift forces the reader again and again into the body" (178). There is no possibility of some kind of moral or any other amendment regarding our body. Swift attacks this basic unit that is so inseperably and unchangeably ours that the reader is at a loss to understand why Swift does so and how he could possibly defend himself against such unexpected and harsh a blow. This is the cruelty and unfairness of Tubbian satire and reader entrapment. In his study on notions of genocide in *Gulliver's Travels*, Rawson describes such Swiftian violence as follows:

> This quality of diffused aggressions needs restating. It is a Swiftian signature, not always adequately recognized. I like to think we understand it better if we acknowledge

> the extent to which it rests on what seems to be a deep impulse, in the languages of castigation and defamation, to subject the distinction between the species and individual groups to an infinite series of tactical and wounding confusions, of which the various resonances of biblical inculpation and massacre are an allegory and a prototype, and of which *Gulliver's Travels* is a replay. (2001, 310)

Swift tactically confuses to wound, wounds to confuse. The situation is far from new to readers of Swift. It is the ultimate Tubbian trap, in its most cruel form: even if we flatter ourselves into believing that we ourselves are not victims of Swift's satire, because we are able to think our way out of its traps, still we are included, because our very physical being is being criticized and assaulted, too. Entrapment, it seems, denies an emergency exit, or as Richardson notes,

> The entrapment is part of the imaginative expression of an outlook and of the feeling attaching to that. What it expresses above all is less a definition of humanity or a savage satirical indignation than a furious frustration that the real and the desired will not even remotely match. (138)

It is exactly such a feeling of "furious frustration" Swift wants to evoke in the reader. The body is shown in a disgusting, defamiliarized form, yet this introduces notions of something familiar, because the conflict is based on the old paradox of man's position. In the context of Swift's "play of proportion," John Sitter points out that

> defamiliarization by scale begins very much at home, with the most familiar of prospects. The fiction's play is a game of calculation, but what it is first calculated to is the body. The most vivid instance of defamiliarization seem to be moments of refamiliarization. (105)

The body, our animal part, is an unalterable part of our predicament as humans. If Swift blames us for this, we indeed have no reply.

This is the reader's impression, and it is really hard to find any escape, even if we question the master Houyhnhnm's authority and thus the beastly Yahoos' counterparts. This is not as easy to do, for Swift has in such a sly way established the Houyhnhnms, of whom Gulliver's master is an important spokesman, as ideals, that it seems highly problematic to dismiss such sublime beings from our favour. In fact, by leading his readers into accepting the Houyhnhnms as ideals, "Swift sets his most subtle trap of all" (Dyson 63).

The Houyhnhnms seem to represent pure reason in an idealized state. Reason makes them believe in universal benevolence and social harmony: "Friendship and Benevolence are the two principal Virtues among the Houyhnhnms; and these are not confined to particular Objects, but universal

to the whole Race" (*GT* 243). They are wise and honest: as a matter of fact, and famously, they even "have no word in their Language to express Lying or Falsehood." They describe a lie for lack of other expressions by calling it "*the thing which was not*" (*GT* 216). But then, the Houyhnhnms are out of reach for humans. In his description of the horses, their behaviour and society, Swift seems to sketch a utopia of perfect reason:

> As these noble *Houyhnhnms* are endowed by Nature with a general Disposition to all Virtues, and have no Conceptions or Ideas of what is evil in a rational Creature; so their grand Maxim is, to cultivate *Reason*, and to be wholly governed by it. Neither is *Reason* among them a Point problematical as with us, where Men can argue with Plausibility on both Sides of a Question; but strikes you with immediate Conviction; as it must needs do where it is not mingled, obscured, or discoloured by Passion and Interest. I remember it was with extreme Difficulty that I could bring my Master to understand the Meaning of the Word *Opinion*, or how a Point could be disputable; because *Reason* taught us to affirm or deny where we are certain; and beyond our Knowledge we cannot do either. (*GT* 242)

This at first sight indeed seems very much like a rare instance of a Swiftian positive. There is no doubt that the Houyhnhnms are noble horses. Their pure reason, which "strikes you with immediate Conviction," which is uncontaminated by human ambition and passion, may be, without too great a danger of Swiftian scorn, looked upon as ideal. However, it is important not to lose sight of its impracticability, which is actually what is of relevance in the context of reader entrapment. Like More's Utopians, who "never dispute concerning happiness without fetching some arguments from the principles of religion, as well as from natural reason" (72), the Houyhnhnms are suffused with reason and calm morality. In Houyhnhnmland, there are no disputes, no arguments and no dissent, for when everybody is gifted with perfect reason, these phenomena do not occur anymore. As a matter of fact, there is one, in my view very notable exception to this rule: according to Gulliver, "the only Debate" which ever occurred to them was, if "the Yahoos should be exterminated from the Face of the Earth" (GT 245).

Swift's wise horses live in the realm of pure reason: there are no questions; only reason itself is relevant to them and there is only inside, no outside of reason. Their reason is static; there are no aspirations, there is no research, no studies, no looking for truth or wisdom, because truth and wisdom are readily at hand without requiring any effort or personal development. Concerning the Houyhnhnms, virtue must be termed differently, for the horses do not know good and evil, passion or temptation. Thus, their virtue is actually their predicament, their state, it is not something which has to be developed and strengthened in any kind of moral struggle. Everything is simple, because

reason is there. The Houyhnhnms' simplicity and harmony is the reward of their being gifted with pure reason. This is an ideal, Utopian or even Edenic state.

Yet, ironically, their scorn and cold calculations concerning the Yahoos remove the Houyhnhnms considerably from the ideal. The way the Houyhnhnms treat Gulliver and the Yahoos makes the arrogance of European colonists resemble theirs and "there is considerable evidence in Book IV to point circumstantially to a history of brutality towards the Yahoos by the horses," as Kelly (2002, 850) states. The very substantial flaw in the Houyhnhnms, their lack of any capacity of feeling, can thus also be observed in their disdainful treatment of the Yahoos. Swift himself cannot help giving some relief from the Houyhnhnms' sober reasonableness by having Gulliver ironically remark "what Destruction such a Doctrine" of pure reason "would make in the Libraries of Europe; and how many Paths to Fame would be then shut up in the Learned World" (*GT* 243). On the other hand, this thought is an expression of the fact that the Houyhnhnms' attitude towards life is simply not transferable to our world. The Houyhnhnms cannot be compared to men: not only does Swift's imagery suggest this (a man might be an ape, but certainly not a horse), but also in that the Houyhnhnms are close to even being non-physical. The fact that the Houyhnhnms are only preoccupied with things reasonable obviously leads to their having very serious limitations, as has been frequently observed: they have a view of life that is merely functional, they have very limited interests and consequently limited vocabulary, for everything outside the realm of perfect reason is irrelevant to them.

Hence, even if the Houyhnhnms appear to show calm, benevolent, and equal affection towards all representatives of their species, which is nothing more than functional, I doubt if terms such as love, hate, passion, joy, fear, etc. are likely to be found in Houyhnhnm vocabulary. There is a deep stoicism about these horses which makes them live healthily and functionally, accept such inevitable calamities as death calmly, and have no close personal bonds and attachments, because on the one hand they basically lack deep emotion and on the other hand they deem society (or species) more important than the individual:

> They have no Fondness for their Colts or Foles; but the Care they take in educating them proceedeth entirely from the Dictates of Reason […] They will have it that Nature teaches them to love the whole Species […] When the Matron Houyhnhnms have produced one of each Sex, they no longer accompany with their Consorts […] In their Marriages they are exactly careful to chuse such Colours as will not make any disagreeable Mixture in the Breed. Strength is chiefly valued in the Male, and Comeliness in the Female; not upon the Account of Love, but to preserve the Race from degenerating […] The young couple meet and are joined, merely because it is the Determination of their Parents and Friends: It is what they see done every Day; and they look upon it as one of the necessary Actions in a reasonable Being. (*GT* 243/244)

In this passage Swift adds to the reader's growing scepticism. In Gulliver's ironically praising and admiring words, Swift paints a picture of a sterile society, entirely governed by cold reason, exhibiting a total lack of any sort of feeling in such an expressive way that it simply cannot be taken as ideal. In spite of Swift's frequent praise of common sense and practical thinking in his writings, the Houyhnhnms' rationality is far more than this: it is the rule of reason at the price of the exclusion of all other aspects of life and existence. Marriage is not a question of love but convenience; the family is abolished; sex is reduced to its basic function of breeding and preservation of the species; the general good is considered more important than individual well-being. Moreover, I am convinced that this is exactly what Swift wants his readers to realize. This is another Swiftian trap: a double bluff, as it were. Swift has made us look the wrong way for quite some time, he has made us loathe the Yahoos and admire the Houyhnhnms, but now that we learn more about the Houyhnhnm society we find it very hard to still perceive them as ideal. Their society is arrogant, cold and inhumanly calculating (something which Swift abhorred in the context of English policy towards Ireland, for instance), and it lacks vital qualities, essential dimensions of life.

This explains much about Swift's ironically undercutting his own Houyhnhnm ideals and may account for the fact that, for instance, Swift makes fun of Gulliver's master's being very often at a loss to find words for the issues Gulliver raises about his homeland. In other words, what seemed a clear Swiftian ideal at the beginning quickly looks rather dull, one-dimensional. In his treatment of the Yahoos and Gulliver, Swift even creates a picture of lofty, scornful arrogance. Ehrenpreis offers a useful description which explains the Houyhnhnms' nature in terms of Swift's overall strategy in the *Travels*:

> The Houyhnhnms are serious embodiments of moral ideals until they become, for a moment, the butt of a little farce. If the satirist embodies himself in his work, he also keeps withdrawing from it, smiling at the naïveté of his own ideals. The harmony of Swift's book lies in comic themes – confrontations of mind and body – connected by an ironic tone which is focused in turn on the ambiguous relation of the author to his project. This comic, ironic self-awareness, flickering on and off without warning, is the true, animating spirit that bathes Swift's masterpiece. In the jurisprudence of this sensibility there is always an appeal from the sublime to the ridiculous. (III 450)

It remains to state that such a strategy of paradox and ambiguity, of changing perspective, stance and tone, based on the author's "comic, ironic self-awareness" and consequent absence, constitutes the "animating spirit" "that bathes" not only *Gulliver's Travels* but in its Tubbian nature most of Swift's satiric writing, accounting for the effect of reader entrapment.

Gulliver hates the Yahoos; but what he hates even more is to see himself as some kind of Yahoo: "When I happened to behold the Reflection of my own Form in a Lake or Fountain, I turned away my Face in Horror and

detestation of my self; and could better endure the Sight of a common *Yahoo*, than of my own Person" (*GT* 251/252). Thus, he chooses the Houyhnhms, and goes insane. What now is the reader to choose? We have two choices available, but as a matter of fact none of them is favourable:

> As for man, represented by Gulliver, he is left in a disastrous microcosmic vacuum. Instead of having his own distinctive place, he has to *be* one or the other of the extremes. Swift drives a wedge between the intellectual and the emotional, makes one good, the other evil, and pushes them further apart, as moral opposites, than any except the most extreme Puritans have usually done. The result is the kind of tormenting and bitter dilemma which always lies in wait for those who do this [...] The ideal is unattainable, the vicious alternative inescapable, and both are so unattractive that one is at a loss to decide which one dislikes more. (Dyson 64)

This is another neat description of the Tubbian trap. We are seated in Swift's spinning Tub again, beholding the two extremist choices available to us on its outer surface, and wondering how to get out. Granted, we do not as usual really have a choice, for neither Yahoos nor Houyhnhnms evidently constitute a viable solution for most of us. As for Gulliver, he *has* to fail to meet the idealistic expectations of his Houyhnhmn teachers, because it is the very nature of ideals (even if only seemingly so) never to be attained. It is Swift's cruel aim to make us humble in the sight of our possibilities. Swift's vision is very bleak here, as Richardson states in the context of mankind's right to freedom:

> *Gulliver's Travels* [...] presents a vision of the world in which desired good is radically distant from perceived reality, and in which there is no possibility of a meeting of the two. With respect to slavery, there is a frustrated discontent at the mismatch between a love of freedom and an apprehension of the world, in which people are unworthy and incapable of being free. (145)

Yet, Swift might give us a hint about how he perceives the human predicament when he makes Gulliver report a comment made by his master Houyhnhnm, telling his country horses that he "had now in his Possession, a certain wonderful Yahoo (meaning myself)" (*GT* 246). We may at times use reason, but from the perspective of pure rationality, men and their limited possibilities generally appear in the form of Yahoos, however "wonderful" some of them might be. Nonetheless, the Houyhnmns themselves do not in fact qualify as pursuable ideals. Pure reason does not accept anything outside its borders, and this might also be looked upon as a Swiftian warning, for the realm of pure reason at this point very much resembles extremist or totalitarian stances attacked in his satires.

Swift shows us the vanity of human ambition towards "Right Reason", as many Augustans would have called it, and at the same time makes us behold our animal nature in its most disgusting aspects. As usual, he does not offer any solutions. The reader again has to think his way out, leaving Swift's extremist satirical vision behind and returning to his real self. What man has to do is to accept the human predicament, however humbling.

As for Gulliver, brought to see his real nature by meeting with various hyperbolical satiric comparisons: he strives until the end to reach the perfection of his haughty Houyhnhnm masters. He is obsessed with the idea that imitation of the Houyhnhnms' perfect reason may improve his state, in spite of his obvious inability to *be* like them, and he is equally obsessed with his abhorrence of the Yahoos and fellow Englishmen, who, he has come to have no doubt, are of quite the same quality. Rescued by a Portuguese ship, he is totally at a loss to recognize the captain's, Pedro de Mendez's, human virtues such as sympathy and kindness, patience and tolerance, honesty and helpfulness. All he sees in this benevolent and friendly man is another Yahoo. I may be allowed, in this context, to dare a dismissive assertion in disfavour of the Houyhnhnms: there is no doubt that Gulliver's master Houyhnhnm would have seen Mendez in the same light.

Gulliver loathes first the Yahoos and then everything human, he regards everything in his English homeland as utterly unreasonable, his fellow citizens and neighbours, and even his family as in fact absolutely incapable of reason and higher aspiration. This is basically his master's view. Swift brings the *Travels* to its final nervous climax when Gulliver meets his family and cannot stand their company. This is the final estrangement which satiric vision makes Swift's *persona* suffer, leading as a last step to Gulliver's rejection of his own human nature. Given the Tubbian nature of Swift's satires, it is no accident that the book ends in paradox. Made too proud and arrogant by the time spent among the Houyhnhnms and by his own pathetic attempts to imitate the noble horses, Gulliver rejects his neighbours and even his family. Living in the horse stable, miserably trying to copy the Houyhnhnms' way of living, thus looking at himself as the only "wonderful Yahoo" among the common sort and hence mad with pride himself, he finds fault in the pride of Yahoos, that is, men. In his contempt of his countrymen's lack of reason, he himself is the most fitting example of such a predicament. Mentally deranged, he complains about the madness of the world.

In his contempt for humanity, Gulliver seems to have finally become the most contemptible human in the *Travels*. Gulliver is entrapped in his hatred of the Yahoos and thus ironically corroborates the implicit claim that the Yahoos deserve their slavery. Yet, what is the reader supposed to do with this final image of Gulliver? Pity him? Condemn him? Even join him in his contempt, because otherwise there is only shame? As always in Tubbian situations, Swift remains silent. Reader entrapment in Swift is designed to make us think, make us compare; and the only suggestion Swift may be claimed to offer his readers here is not to do as Gulliver does. Gulliver's travels end in the midst of the satiric Tub, disproportionate, disoriented, entrapped.

S W I F T
T H E T U B B I A N
A U T H O R.

SECTION 3

MYTHOLOGIZING SWIFT: SWIFT THE TUBBIAN AUTHOR

This Place he got by Wit and Rhyme,
And many Ways most odd;
And might a Bishope be in a Time
Did he believe in God. […]

Look down St. Patrick, look we pray,
On thine own Church and Steeple;
Convert the Dean on this great Day,
Or else God help the People.

And now, whene'er his D——n-sh–p dies,
Upon his Stone be graven,
A Man of God here buried lies,
Who never thought of Heaven.[78]

As these verses, supposedly fastened to the gates of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on the day of Swift's installation as Dean in 1713, show, Swift's reputation as a clergyman was severely damaged at that time. The poem was composed by another Irish cleric, Jonathan Smedley, vicar of a parish in County Cork and an active Whig, and shows the way many devout believers in Ireland felt. Swift seemed a rather unchristian cleric of whose values you could never be sure. Swift's involvement in satire, popular political pamphleteering to pursue personal gain and acclaim seemed indeed to make him unworthy of the position of a prominent Anglican dean. Yet, this picture of Swift changed, and Dubliners and Irish in general learned to appreciate, admire and even celebrate their "Dean Swift" in later years. Nonetheless, this welcome shows an important feature of the way Swift was perceived in public: there was, and still is, basic insecurity and ambiguity concerning Swift's "true" character.

A study of Swift's literary achievement may not stop at the author, the man. John Hawkesworth, one of Swift's early biographers, notes in his *Account of the Life of the Revd. Jonathan Swift* (1755) that Swift's life "does not afford less instruction than his writings" (40). Especially when observed from the perspective of reader entrapment, thus focusing on the *perception* of an

[78] Smedley, Jonathan. "A Copy of Verses fast'nd to the Gate of St. P–'s C–h D–r, on the Day of the I–t of a certain D–n." *An Hue and Cry after Doctor S–t; Occasion'd by a True and Exact Copy of Part of his Own Diary, found in his Pocket-Book, etc. To Which is added a Poem etc.* 1714, p. 14-15 (quoted in Kelly 50). Smedley kept on writing versed attacks against Swift, which Swift did not fail to reply in kind.

author and his work by his audience, it is absolutely necessary to try to shed some light on the ways the work reflects on the public image of the author and vice versa. As I shall attempt to demonstrate, this interaction is especially interesting with Swift, for the public and partly self-intended image of Swift very much resembles the image, and even the imagery, of his satiric work, this leading to the rather interesting fact that interpreters of Swift's character face similar problems as interpreters of Swift's Tub.

Not unlike his satires, Swift the man was often considered by many to be of a rather disturbing character; not unlike his Tub, Swift's multi-facetted, kaleidoscopic and seemingly paradoxical traits seem to deny and escape reliable scrutiny and evaluation, never ceasing to beg new questions and yield contradicting answers. There have been various biographers who have tried to characterize Swift, but it is a notable fact that very few, if any at all, seem to have really succeeded, or as Swift's friend and biographer Thomas Sheridan remarked as early as 1785, "Perhaps there never was a man whose true character was so little known, or whose conduct at all times, even from his first setting out in life, has been so misrepresented to the world." Stunningly, Sheridan concludes that the "chief source of all the erroneous opinions entertained of him, arose from Swift himself" (ii). This leads him to the following explanation:

> His very civilities bore the appearance of rudeness, and his finest compliments were conveyed under the disguise of satyr. Lord Bolingbroke, who knew him well, in two words, summed up his character in this respect, by saying, that Swift was a *hypocrite reversed*. In short, he always appeared to the world in a mask, which he never took off but in the company of his most intimate friends: and as the world can judge only by appearances, no wonder they were so much mistaken in the ideas formed of him. (ii)

The image Sheridan offers is one of an almost *persona*-like Swift; of Swift wearing his mask as it suits the satiric moment as well as the overall satiric strategy. This prompts the question of what such Swiftian overall strategy could have been. As I will try to show, observations such as Sheridan's prompt my definition of Swift as a Tubbian author.

Sheridan's lament on Swift's being utterly misrepresented still holds some truth, although there is, and actually there always has been, a lot of information on Swift available. However, there is something problematic concerning this information, for although there have been very many and varied approaches to Swift's life, this abundance of information is largely as elusive as the Tub's. There are, of course, the pieces of information we get from Swift's fragmentary autobiography, but this document is a rather unreliable source; it is an unfinished work that Swift would never have liked to be published in its incomplete and imperfect form. In addition, it is very dangerous to rely on information on his person given by Swift himself, for Swift was himself very much aware of the importance of the ways he styled himself to appear in public. A more valuable source is Swift's correspondence, which

tells us quite a lot about his personal beliefs and social relationships, although there, too, we constantly come across Swift's voice of refined ironic conversation or harsh satiric attack, a rather slippery ground for conclusions, too.

It is impossible to offer a portrait of Swift without taking into account the various ways in which he has been presented to the public. As Landa notes, since Swift "always moved in the realm of violent controversy," he was "seldom the object of a wholly unbiased judgement" (xv). As early as 1758, W. H. Dilworth argued that "Swift's merit, through the industrious resentment of party, had been clouded in part for a long time; but those whom he struck at being now deceas'd, and the present sting of his satire worn away, nothing appears to posterity but the keenness of his wit" (iii). Dilworth's judgement shows an early awareness of the considerable damage first commentators on the life of Swift had given to Swift's reputation. It is an aim of the present study to show why experience has proven Dilworth right in his trust in the enduring attraction of Swift's "keenness of wit," but wrong concerning his claim that the sting of Swift's satire can really be "worn away." In fact, it speaks in favour of the unique "sting" of the strategy of reader entrapment employed in Swiftian satire that Dilworth was grossly mistaken in his opinion that Swift's enemies were dead. Swift's Tubbian satires are by their very nature resistant to any loss of edge, keep creating new offence, and new enemies, and this leads to the fact that after Dilworth, two centuries of spiteful commentary on Swift were to follow.

The author of the commonly acknowledged standard biography on Swift, Irvin Ehrenpreis, lays an excellent authoritative foundation for reliable study and research by sticking to the handed-down facts about Swift's life, revising various sources and drawing from scholarly annotated editions of Swift's poetry and prose without being tempted to raise too many speculative questions. Ehrenpreis, who is "less concerned to add than to eliminate fables" (I ix), scorns the unscholarly nature of many biographical attempts at Swift before him; this making him state, famously, that his work omits some of the myths swirling around Swift: "Here, neither Swift nor Stella is made a bastard; Swift does not say, 'My Uncle gave me the education of a dog;' Dryden does not say, 'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet'; and Temple does not seat Swift and Stella at the servants' table" (I ix). Swift would have approved of such procedure, for it was one of his firmest beliefs that the principal guidance of every human being should be sober observation and common sense, and not sensational curiosity. As Ehrenpreis states,

> Scholarship cannot hope to rival the dramatic narratives that Johnson and Scott have embedded in English literary culture. But it can offer materials to those who would rather come near Swift himself than be entertained with fascinating legends. (III 920)

In spite of this attitude and aim, there is at least one notable exception where Ehrenpreis found it necessary to speculate, and this is concerning Swift's relationships with women. This is in fact a realm where most commentators are

drawn into speculative attempts at figuring Swift out. On this topic, Nokes states that Swift "may well have liked to demonstrate his powers over women as a method of seeking the affection of the one woman, his mother, who had so hurt him by her neglect." (1985, 15) In the same vein, Ehrenpreis is left to state that a great amount of his "discussion of Stella and Vanessa is speculation based on Freudian psychology or on inferences drawn from a few data" (III 416). His conclusion that a childhood trauma must be the reason for the alleged peculiarity of Swift's sexuality and his preoccupation with the human body is the seed of what in my view conspicuously looks like another Swiftian myth, this time a psychoanalytical one.

As with many of Swift's eccentricities, we are bound to be lured into the realm of speculation and far-fetched theories. There is much myth-making and rather scarce hard facts about Swift's private attitudes unveiled and unobscured by either malicious remarks from unscholarly criticism or Swift's irony. Deane Swift, Jonathan's great-nephew and biographer, states that spiteful comments on a great man are only natural, "the envy, malice, and rancour of the ill-natured part of the world being always ready to affix the characteristick of partiality, and perhaps the imputation of falsehood on all performances, wherein the writer is supposed to have any the least concern" (4/5). Sheridan emphasizes the fact that Swift was inevitably bound to have many enemies in "a season wherein faction raged with the greatest violence." Swift "was looked upon as the principal champion of the Tory cause, and therefore was the common butt at which all the Writers of the Whig side levelled their shafts" (iii). It remains to be restated that it is in the very nature of satire to create enmity; and Swift's Tub, of course, is no exception, but rather, for its effect of reader entrapment, a veritable mechanism for the creation of new enemies.

Yet, in this whole context of spiteful myth-making, it is still a bit of a relief to note that generally speculation is never completely out of place when writing biography. As McMinn states, it is characteristic of good biographers to realize "that a degree of speculation is inevitable, even desirable, in the recreation of a life, its motives, and its obsessions" (16). However, the tricky question is only what such "a degree" should best amount to. In such an approach, it appears that, like in Swift's satires, it becomes necessary for the biographer to confront some almost hopelessly difficult questions as well as to hypothesize about their answers in order to form an interpretation of Swift's character. Thus, what happens to the biographers is exactly the same as what the readers of Swift's satires experience: they are lured into participation (by Swift's fascinating personal eccentricities, the Tub's spinning surface and sensational extremism, that is) and left, or forced, to think their way out. Hence, Swift the man asks for the same effort as his satiric Tub; such is the basic nature of entrapment in Swift.

There is no doubt that Swift cherished his literary and personal fame highly, however questionable it was with certain contemporaries and critics. Swift's style as writer and person of course provoked and at times sneeringly welcomed reactions of almost uncanny awe and distrust. Recent biographical studies have even gone as far as to suggest that Swift took as much pains in cultivating his personal image in public as in refining his great

literary skills.[79] It must be stated that Swift did not succeed in the creation of a favourable public image, for many among the features ascribed to him during his life and after his death were not the ones he would have wished for. Still, as McMinn argues, the history of Swiftian biography "was itself anticipated and imagined by Swift, who realized that his life would become as contentious as his work, and that he would be created and reinvented by friends and enemies alike" (14). In other words, the "extent to which a literary work reflects, betrays, or conceals its author is an issue which concerned Swift as much as it has concerned his biographers."

Swift's concern becomes especially clear in his proliferation of a number of personal anecdotes (especially about his youth), his yet unfinished autobiography, as well as his pseudo-biographical (because written in a third-person perspective), to an impossibly calculable extent autobiographical poems. Probably the best examples for this kind of Swiftian self-representation are his famed *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift* (1739) or the well-known epitaph he himself composed to be written on the marble plaque close to his grave in St. Patrick's Cathedral.[80] Both poems demonstrate the ways in which Swift imagines, mockingly, as usual, what the public opinion of him will be once he has died. However, these are significantly more than just Swiftian jokes in that they show Swift's preoccupation with and anticipation of biographical speculation. There is in fact good reason for studying the ways Swift himself and his critics took pains to draw his portrait.

A great part of the public image of Swift in his own days and, rather surprisingly, even in our time still relies on early reports and comments on his life, accounts which resemble myths. The truth of such myths characteristically cannot be confirmed by consulting historical evidence; and their origins are odd and often blurred, leading to their equally characteristic tenacious persistence. Thus, early commentaries on Swift's life began a tradition of guesswork which has continued until today. Biographers, too, have indeed found their Tub, for

> Swift as a person is so elusive that the temptation to extrapolate and to fictionalize him is enormous […] And once any anecdote or speculation about Swift appears in print, it becomes part of the confused and confusing

[79] cf. especially Ann Cline Kelly, *Jonathan Swift and Popular Culture. Myth, Media, and the Man*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.

[80] As the epitaph of Swift's grave in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, reads, in the lines composed by Swift himself:
Hic depositum est Corpus
JONATHAN SWIFT, S.T.D.
Huius Ecclesiae Cathedralis Decani,
Ubi Saeva Indignatio Ulterius
Cor lacerare nequit.
Abi Viator
Et imitare, si poteris,
Strenuum pro virili
Libertatis Vindicatorem.
Obiit 19 Die Mensis Octobris
A.D. 1745 Anno fitatis 78

> tradition. His exorbitant personality and satirical manner have been magnets for myth. (Glendinning 7)

We are in fact missing essential information about Swift's life: there are some uncertainties about who Swift's father was; we only know very little about Swift's early childhood; we do not know without doubt about his marital status; we do not know even about the exact circumstances of his death. John Boyle, Earl of Orrery, was Swift's first biographer, whose rather malevolent account of Swift's life, *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Jonathan Swift* (1751), had a strangely deep impact on everything that was written afterwards about Swift. Boyle's idea that the work, and particularly *Gulliver's Travels*, showed Swift's alleged madness, turned out to persist for over a century. Boyle (15) also first introduced the claim, so much damned by Ehrenpreis, that Swift himself created the rumour that Sir William Temple was in fact his father. Another version claims Sir William's father, John Temple, who was a good friend to Godwin Swift, Jonathan's wealthy Dublin uncle, who took care of him when his mother left for Leicestershire, was in fact Swift's father. Nevertheless, it seems more reliable to trust Swift's own account that his father, equally named Jonathan, had worked for some years at the law courts in the city of Dublin and been elected Steward of the King's Inn when he died at the early age of 25. In fact, Swift was born in Dublin in 1667 a posthumous child, so his father could not affirm his legitimacy, and this is how rumours about his origin could flourish (Ehrenpreis I 27).

Swift spent his first years in Dublin, at 7 Hoey's Court, a respectable house. The place belonged to his prosperous uncle, Godwin Swift, who took care of him and his elder sister Jane after their mother had emigrated to England to live with her relations in the Leicester area. There has been much discussion about why Swift's widowed mother would leave him and his sister to the hands of their Dublin uncle. It seems a very strange step today. However, in Swift's time it was not altogether unusual for children not to be raised by their parents but other relations, be that for economic reasons or on other personal or organizational grounds (Ehrenpreis I 29). All that is known today is that Swift's mother was respected by her relatives, so there had not been a quarrel. Still, her reasons for thus leaving her children will probably never be entirely uncovered.

Whatever the reasons for his mother's departure from Dublin, Swift, at least in his adult years, seems to have accepted her move and not to have had any hard feelings towards his mother, as the entry in his account book, made after having learnt of her death in 1710, implies: "I have now lost my barrier between me and death; God grant I may live to be as well prepared for it, as I confidently believe her to have been! If the way to Heaven be through piety, justice, and charity, she is there" (quoted in Ehrenpreis I 28).

Yet, it is indisputable that growing up without his parents and being thus left by his mother must have had an influence on Swift's later sense of autonomy. Swift got to know the feeling of being dependent on the goodwill of relatives or even strangers at a very early stage; and this may account for Swift's ambitious character, his intention to build up a career (be that in

politics, the Church, or literature), thus earning respect and gaining an independent life for himself.

A rather notable anecdote concerning his early youth is Swift's own account of his being kidnapped and taken to England by his nurse. As Swift himself tells in his *Fragment of Autobiography*, he

> was born in Dublin, on St Andrews day, in the year 1667; and when he was a year old, an event happened to him that seems very unusual; for his nurse, who was a woman of Whitehaven, being under an absolute necessity of seeing one of her relations, who was then extremely sick, and from whom she expected a legacy, and being at the same time extremely fond of the infant, she stole him on shipboard unknown to his mother and uncle, and carried him with her to Whitehaven, where he continued for almost three years. For, when the matter was discovered, his mother sent orders by all means not to hazard a second voyage, till he could be better able to spare it. The nurse was so careful of him, that before he returned he had learnt to spell; and by the time that he was three years old he could read any chapter in the Bible. (*PW* I 369)

Such a remarkable occurrence was, of course, very apt to stimulate the imagination of various biographers and critics. Some among these tried to rank this among the reasons for some alleged emotional disorder in Swift and his supposed problematic attitude towards, and relationships, with women, the rumours about which were not insignificantly further fostered by Swift himself, who wrote poems to two women at the same time: Esther Johnson ("Stella"), his closest friend, and Hester Vanhomrigh ("Vanessa"). In addition, Swift never bothered to explain these relationships and it is indeed notable that Swift gave his poem "Cadenus and Vanessa" (Cadenus as anagram of *Decanus*, Dean), describing his complicated relationship with young and passionate Vanessa, to his friend Alexander Pope for publication in their *Miscellanies* (1727/1728), together with poems he had originally written for Stella, such as "To Stella, Visiting Me in My Sickness," showing the closeness of his friendship with her. Even if, according to Ehrenpreis (II 73), Swift is allowed to have to a certain extent "underestimated the persistence of gossip" in his relationships with women, it is little wonder that Swift's "decision to create the spectacle of himself as a bachelor Dean linked in print simultaneously with two different women made heads spin" (Kelly 2002, 73).

Swift's relationships with women, too, provoke a considerable amount of mystery. According to Nokes, "Swift was clearly attractive to women, and was testing his powers on them" (1985, 15). There were three women in Swift's life, Stella and Vanessa, mentioned above, as well as Jane Waring (called "Varina" by Swift), whom he met during his appointment to Kilroot and to whom he unsuccessfully proposed in 1696. Still, when later Varina herself turned to show an intense interest in marriage, Swift declined, probably

because of his relationship with Stella (Ehrenpreis II 22). Vanessa's passionate love may well have intimidated Swift, who always had "the fear of what such a temper could do to bring scandal on his head" (Ehrenpreis III 381). Her passions and "violations of decorum" alarmed and thrilled Swift, "a man obsessed with discretion," as Ehrenpreis states (II 647).

Again, we meet paradox in Swift's "testing his powers" and being obsessed "with discretion." Esther Johnson and her companion Rebecca Dingley even followed Swift from Moor Park to Dublin. In spite of the fact that Swift took many precautions to avoid scandal, sources for gossip were manifold, so that even six years after their arrival in Dublin, Thomas Swift could still wonder if cousin Jonathan had "been able to resist the charms of both those gentlewomen that marched quite from Moore-Park to Dublin (as they would have marched to the *north* or anywhere else), with full resolution to engage him" (*Corr*. I 56). There were in fact rumours of Swift being secretly married to Esther Johnson, but such a marriage was never publicly acknowledged. On the contrary, as Nokes notes, Swift's sneering laughter at marriage seems to imply a "determination much stronger than the usual young man's boast of not getting caught." (1985, 15) I agree with Ehrenpreis, who holds that Swift evaded marriage "in order to escape his father's fate: an untimely death, with the abandonment of a pregnant wife to the dependence of poverty" (III 405).[81] Swift's fear of unwise marriages is shown in his following thoughts on the subject:

> Among all the young gentlemen that I have known to have ruined theirselves [sic] by marrying (which I assure you is a great number) I have made this general rule, that they are either young, raw and ignorant scholars, who for want of knowing company, believe every silk petticoat includes an angel, or else they have been a sort of honest young men who perhaps are too literal in rather marrying than burning and entail misery on themselves and posterity by an over-acting modesty. (*Corr*. I 4)

Yet, this does not change the sincerity of his relationship with Stella. By all the evidence handed down, from Swift's own writings to accounts by contemporaries, we can assume that Swift's feelings for Stella were deep. During the night of Stella's funeral, which his illness would not permit him to attend, Swift is said not to have been able to bear the light from St. Patrick's, which was shining through his bedroom window, so that he had to move to another room. Ehrenpreis notes that he must have felt then "that his real life was over" (III 549).

[81] There was yet another rumour about Swift and Stella, which, as Nokes states, "has irresistible attractions for those who believe that Swift was, or believed himself to be, Temple's natural son": The favouritism Stella was treated with in the Temple household "inevitably caused gossip and it was often rumoured that she was Temple's natural daughter." Hence, these theories "could explain the enigma of their relationship in a way that involves romantic heartache, artistic symmetry, a guilty secret, and a vibrant sub-text for a great many of Swift's works" (19).

To return to Swift's anecdote, more recent biographers and critics are very sceptical of the accuracy of such little Swiftian stories such as the kidnapping story, which only too often had been taken at face value or at least quoted with little critical distance. Ehrenpreis notes that Swift was "over seventy and notoriously forgetful" when he composed the fragmentary autobiography, and that thus "details must be handled with care" (I 30). As Nokes states, "The evident unreliability of the autobiography has led subsequent biographers to question not only Swift's facts but also his motives in supplying them" (1985, 4). Hence, some critics doubt Swift's reliability not in terms of senility but in fact accuse him of deliberate self-mythologizing.[82] Johnston argues that Swift's anecdotes are intentional, brilliant disguise, preparing "an account of what he wished to have said on himself" (14). Kelly's provocative study focuses on mythmaking in Swift, claiming that an "unheralded aspect of Jonathan Swift's genius is his use of print to make himself a legend in his own time, and, it seems, forever after" (2002, 1). Thus, she not only focuses on myths and legends (the terms of which she uses interchangeably) created by Swift's critics, but also on a conscious steering and manipulating of those by Swift himself:

> Swift's self-representations and the attacks of his enemies combined to build the public image of a man with threatening power, cloaked vices, inconsistent principles, and subversive ideas. Endowed with these qualities, Swift became a legend in emerging print culture of the early eighteenth century, during which time an avalanche of popular publications in broadside or pamphlet form became the equivalent of Virgil's many-tongued monster, *fama*. (2002, 9)

Hence, Kelly suggests an active role of Swift in mythologizing, assisted by two factors: first, the emergence of print, and second, Swift's linked decision to write "popular literature" for a broad audience including minimally-educated as well as highly-sophisticated readers. She moreover perceives the inherent paradox in such a strategy, for Swift's reluctance to write in the manner of a devout clergyman naturally met with contemporary censure, yet caused his promotion to notorious celebrity. Harth, who studies Swift's self-portraying in his correspondence with Pope, sees in such mythologizing Swift's use of himself as *persona*: asserting that his letters show Swift "adopting one or the other of several distinct roles appropriate in each case to the kind of satire in which he is engaged" (1985, 121). In my view, the most radical approach to Swift's self-mythologizing is proposed by Nokes, who discusses Swift's fame to be a "hypocrite reversed" as follows: [83]

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[82] cf. Joseph McMinn, "Swift's Life"; Ann Cline Kelly, *Jonathan Swift and Popular Culture. Myth, Media, and the Man*; Victoria Glendinning, *Jonathan Swift*; and Philip Harth, "Swift's Self-Image as a Satirist."

[83] As a reminder: In his *Life of the Rev. Dr. Jonathan Swift* (1784), Sheridan mentions that Henry St John, Viscount Bolingbroke, characterized Swift as a "hypocrite reversed": "His very civilities bore the appearance of rudeness, and his finest compliments were conveyed under the

> [T]he most enduring monster that he [Swift] created to provoke and vex us was not Celia or Strephon, or a Struldbrug or a Yahoo, but himself. He left us with the carefully cultivated image of a lonely misanthrope, chiselling his savage indignation on his tombstone, and leaving, as his benefactions to mankind, a privy and a madhouse. Only by acknowledging the ineradicable self-interest that makes each human being his own tempter, tormentor, and judge, can we face up to the challenge of Swift's ironies, and recognize the essential honesty and humanity that made him prefer to seem a monster rather than a hypocrite. (1985, 413)

Such a view of Swift the author is indeed very stimulating in the context of reader entrapment and Tubbian strategy. The resolution to "seem a monster rather than a hypocrite" presents a basic notion of Swift's satiric intention and strategy to shock and deceive in order to be honest, the inherent paradox of all his Tubbian visions. Hence, there is indeed ample reason to study the ways Swift seems to evade reliable characterization and how various myths succeeded in the creation of the strangely distorted image of Swift as monstrous hypocrite reversed.

In 1673, at the age of six, Swift was sent to the prestigious Kilkenny Grammar School, considered to be one of the best schools in Ireland (Ehrenpreis I 34). A Protestant institution for children of the Church of Ireland, it gave Swift an introduction to an excellent education. From there, he entered Trinity College in 1682 (Ehrenpreis I 43). It was at Trinity College where Swift wrote his first little private parodies and satiric sketches which were to lead to the composition of *A Tale of a Tub*. Swift's frequent mockery of *virtuoso* experiment and the themes of his satire on science were inspired by intellectual life in Dublin and at Trinity College (Ehrenpreis I 47). Swift's academic record was average, and the fact that he took his BA degree in 1686 *speciali gratia* was much exaggerated by Swift himself. In his *Fragment of Autobiography*, Swift claims, famously, that

> he too much neglected some parts of his academick studies, for which he had no great relish by nature, and turned himself to reading history and poetry. So that when the time came for taking his degree of bachelor, although he had lived with great regularity and due observance of the statutes, he was stopped of his degree for dullness and insufficiency, and at last hardly admitted in a manner little to his credit, which is called in that college *speciali gratia*. And this discreditable mark, as I am told, stands upon record in their college registry. (*PW* I 371)

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disguise of satyr. Lord Bolingbroke, who knew him well, in two words, summed up his character in this respect, by saying, that Swift was a *hypocrite reversed*" (3).

This mark was in fact not unusual. Yet, Swift was "by no means a model student": in 1688, he was found guilty of starting tumults in college and insulting the Junior Dean, whose pardon he had to beg publicly on bended knee, which incident led to his being suspended from his degree for a month (Nokes 1985, 12/13). Notwithstanding, Swift did, academically speaking, tolerably well in college. Hence, what the description above really demonstrates is that he did "not so well as the septuagenarian Swift would have wished;" it shows that Swift had his preferences in languages and history and neglected what he would always dislike: formal rhetoric and abstract philosophy (Ehrenpreis I 62).

Swift's studies at Trinity came to an abrupt end in April 1689 with the threat of war from the political and religious crisis summarized as "the Troubles," which "deprived Swift of his MA" (Nokes 1985, 13). The struggle between James II and William of Orange for the English throne and the triumph of the latter came to be called, from a Protestant perspective and highly ironically when considered from a Catholic point of view, the Glorious Revolution (Clark 158). At the point when it became inevitable that Ireland would be the scene of the decisive military conflict (Battle of the Boyne, 1690), the Trinity authorities advised students to leave the university and the city, which Swift did in 1689 when he visited his mother in Leicester and soon after that started his first employment with Sir William Temple (Nokes 1985, 14).

Yet, what is of main interest here is that Swift's education, the best Ireland could offer, shows that he was not neglected by his relatives, although there was, as has been mentioned, another unreliable anecdote of Swift complaining about ill-treatment by his nearest relations and about having been given the education of a dog. Notwithstanding, taken into account Swift's uncomfortable sense of dependence, this statement may still be not all that imprecise. Swift, in his Dublin home and later at school in Kilkenny and Trinity, was sufficiently provided for but also often uncared for and even ignored (Ehrenpreis I 71). He was doubtlessly also at times treated with quite some rigidity, reminding him of his position as poor relative, fatherless and in effect also lacking a mother.

Swift's Irishness is another rather unclear biographical element yielding further matter for critical dispute. The Dublin of Swift's time was still of a distinctly bilingual nature: Roman Catholics, of whom very many spoke Gaelic, formed about one-third of the city's population according to the 1736 census; and Swift himself, who had probably been looked after by a Gaelic-speaking nursemaid, was very interested in the use of Gaelic loanwords and idiom in the Hiberno-English spoken by country squires. Such interest in Irish tradition was not at all unusual among Anglo-Irishmen; and Swift once requested a translation of the Gaelic verses of *Pléaráca na Ruarcach* ("O'Rourke's Feast"), a wild and lively description of a banquet by a contemporary Irish Catholic squire called Aodh Mac Gabhrán (Hugh MacGauran), to make his own version of the piece (Kiberd 250). Swift's indebtedness to native Ireland's culture and her rich bardic tradition has perhaps been understated in critical biography, although an overemphasis would not do justice to Swift, representative of a distinctly Anglican, Anglo-

Irish Ascendancy, either.[84] It is hard to explain Swift's relationship to Ireland and England, his Irish and English features, as Ehrenpreis shows in stating that

> Swift's moral energy, his deepest patriotism, sprang from the condition of his own country. For all their cultivation, the English were savages when they dealt with the Irish. England was the oppressor, the enemy; Ireland was the victim. In defending his people, Swift was defending humanity. An ambivalence underlay his wavering between two nations, and found expression in his style: the English vocabulary, the Irish mockery; English restraint, Irish exuberance; English scepticism, Irish fantasy. (III 133)

Again, we reach a paradox in our attempt to locate or characterize Swift. All interpretations consequent of such creation of English and Irish categories in Swift's personality and style run the danger of relying rather heavily on the point of view, and, especially, national inclinations of the interpreters. Yet, even if biographical critics try not to be too one-sided, attempt to appreciate and do justice to the different influences on Swift's life and opinions, ambivalence is the final outcome of studies of Swift's Irish- or Englishness.

First of all, it is hardly adequate to consider Swift an Irish patriot. Rather, his at times very contemptuous references to Ireland place him among those members of the English Ascendancy in Ireland who attempted to keep up English manners and custom and treated the native Irish with disdain. To be England-oriented was not without good reason, for it was clear that without "British backing" the English Ascendancy in Ireland, Swift's class, "could not survive" (Ehrenpreis III 153). Needless to say that Swift naturally referred to England in religious terms, the Anglican Church of Ireland only being an outpost surrounded by native Irish Catholics. And yet, Swift became a champion of the Irish cause in politics. Second, Swift's highly ambivalent attitude towards England: it is equally impossible to term Swift a loyal admirer of England, for though he admired the English for much of their cultivation he hated them for much of their politics.

After his appointment as Dean of St. Patrick's, which he first considered a disappointment from grander schemes he had for himself in England, Swift started a new period of strong identification with his home country and felt free to employ his great skills at polemical prose in favour of Ireland and against England in such famous pamphlets as the *Drapier's Letters* (1722) and *A Modest Proposal* (1729), gaining the fame of an Irish patriot. All of a sudden, the dubious Dean of St. Patrick's had become an Irish national hero, who was referred to simply as "the Dean," as if he were the only one in the whole of Ireland. However, in the context of Swift as the Hibernian patriot it is very necessary to remind ourselves, as Ehrenpreis does, that, as a general fact,

[84] Swift's rendition of the poem with its traditionally pugnacious conclusion, a quarrel among the inebriated guests about questions of pedigree, reads as follows: "What stabs and what cuts, / What clatt'ring of sticks, / What strokes on the guts, / What basting and kicks. / Come, down with that beam, / If cudgels are scarce, / A blow on the weam, / Or a kick in the Arse ("The Description of an Irish Feast"; *Poems* 221-23).

"Swift never thought of transforming the social order." Swift "considered Irish frailty, English arrogance, and the general decay of human nature as elements of permanent reality" and it was "against these that the moral conscience had to define itself" (III 166). Summarizing, Swift's ambiguous Irishness may be considered, from a historical perspective, in accordance with a general tendency in Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, to express the "contradictory, vehement, intractably Protestant, but politically Anglophobic character of a uniquely Irish Tory tradition" (Foster 140).

To return to mythologizing, Swift's illness and death especially contributed to his myth. In 1742, Swift suffered from extremely painful orbital cellulitis and his frenzy resultant from the pain led to his being declared *non compos mentis*, of unsound mind and memory. After more years of suffering, Swift died in the year 1745 at the age of seventy-eight and was buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, next to Stella. All his life, Swift had suffered from what is today known as Ménières Disease, a disorder of the inner ear named after its discoverer, the French neurologist Prosper Ménière in 1861. The attacks of deafness were not only a continual source for discomfort but they also "mortified and frightened" Swift, who "could not bear to lose his dignity before strangers or men of rank" (Ehrenpreis III 320). This fear lead to his search for possible means of prevention, and Swift's main measure was severe physical exercise, which he exerted all his life. Yet, all his efforts to stay healthy could not prevent the fact that Swift's final illness, senile debility and mental disorder led to wild rumours of his alleged madness and "the myth of a daemonic Swift was already passing into this world from the crooked inventions of remote tattlers" (Ehrenpreis III 919). In the end, temptingly for many such "tattlers," Swift's being "mad" neatly befitted his epitaph expressing the satirist's *saeva indignation* or his sponsorship of "fellow-madmen" in leaving a large part of his fortune to the foundation of a mental asylum in Dublin. An account given by John Boyle, Earl of Orrery, Swift's first and rather spiteful biographer, makes clear two things: first, the immediate link early critics were ready to establish between Swift the man and his work, and second, the pseudo-moralistic interpretations of Swift's final sufferings:

> The seventh chapter of the voyage of *Brobdingnag* contains such sarcasms on the structure of the human body, as too [sic] plainly shew us, that the author was unwilling to lose any opportunity of debasing and ridiculing his own species. Here a reflexion [sic] naturally occurs, which, without any superstition, leads me tacitly to admire, and confess the ways of Providence: for this great genius, this mighty wit, who seemed to scoff, and scorn all mankind, lived not only to be an example to punish his own pride, and to terrify ours, but underwent some of the greatest miseries to which human nature is liable. (138)

As Reddick tellingly points out, a tradition sprang up centred on Swift's final disease, suffering and death to be exploited by his opponents as moral example and just punishment for misanthropy. The myth of Swift's insanity was

an attempt at explaining away Swift's work, featuring literature which seemed to strongly offend conventional tastes and morality. Reddick notes that Swift's physical and intellectual decay "provided something of a relief, particularly from the burdens and direction of his satire and his peculiar use of wit" (1998, 150). Swift had chosen to be a master at a literary genre which indeed produces enemies; and Swift paid the price by being badly abused posthumously by his formerly abused satiric targets, or people who *felt* they had been his targets (which, considering the subject of the present study, reader entrapment, must potentially have been very numerous).

In this vein, Swift is reduced to a catalogue of physical disorders: "Madness, illness, sexual disturbance, revulsion at the human body and its functions, and a whole fleet of other guesses or claims are cited to explain what is remarkable about his work" (Deane 2003, 243). In the context of mythologizing, Deane makes the highly interesting comment that it is "ironic indeed that Swift, who so often used madness as an emblem of the Moderns' self-involvement, should himself be subject to this kind of interpretation," demonstrating the fact that "he had become for his readers one of his own adopted *personae*" (2003, 244). Apparently, public opinion was strongly influenced by subsequent personal attacks and spiteful comments on the man and his satiric *oevre*, prompted and stimulated by the nature of Swiftian satire as well as Swift the man himself. Yet, this clearly happened at the expense of scholarly discussion of literary worth, or as Reddick concludes, "insistence and consistency with which moralizing on Swift's protracted illness and death substituted for discussion of his work is remarkable" (1998, 152).

Hence, reflections from Swift's satiric work, public animosity furthered by malevolent remarks by adversaries, little private anecdotes Swift promoted himself as well as even occasional silence when one thinks he should have made matters clear to the public, these all in combination created an image of Swift the realism of which is more than uncertain. One very typical example of an author who undertook the task of writing about Swift with rather little regard to his literary work, heavily relying on doubtful sources, as described by Reddick above, is the 19th-century novelist William Makepeace Thackeray. In his lecture on Swift, published in *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* (1853), Thackeray, after having asked the somewhat naïve question whether the readers would have liked to live with Swift in his own days, draws a very negative conclusion as to Swift's personality and character:

> If you had been his inferior in parts […], his equal in mere social station, he would have bullied, scorned, and insulted you; if, undeterred by his great reputation, you had met him like a man, he would have quailed before you, and not had the pluck to reply, and gone home, and years after written a foul epigram about you, watched for you in a sewer, and come out to assail you with a coward's blow and a dirty bludgeon. If you had been a lord with a blue riband [sic], who flattered his vanity, or could help his ambition, he would have been the most delightful company in the world. He would have been so

> manly, so sarcastic, so bright, odd, and original [...] , that you might think he had no object in view but the indulgence of his humour, and that he was the most reckless, simple creature in the world. How he would have torn your enemies to pieces for you! and made fun of the Opposition. (383)

It is hardly necessary to state, with Elias, that Thackeray's characterizations of Swift are not the "work of serious scholarship, nor pretended to be" (133). Yet, in the context of perception of Swift in public, it must be noted that for all their unscholarliness, such cheap sketches, painting "a picture of Swift likely to appeal to Victorian tastes" in their presentation of "an uncouth, misanthropic" Swift, who remembered his days at Moor Park where he had been "relegated to the servants' table and chafing bitterly under an ignoble regimen," in fact "reached an enormous popular readership" (Elias 133). Thackeray clearly equates Swift the man with Swift the satirist in making the satiric, aggressive though "cowardly," method of "ambushing" the enemy, drawing him into the mud and giving the opponent no obvious chance to save or defend himself, a prominent feature of Swift's own personality. Moreover, Swift is represented as proud, ambitious and opportunist, as a cheap Grub Street hireling due to his activities as political pamphleteer and his change in support of the Whigs to the Tories. Thackeray is notorious for his censure of Swift's character and work, his treatment of Swift has been a foundation stone of the popular view of Swift as a bitter misanthrope and is one of the major examples of the harsh treatment of Swift by the Victorians and their predecessors.

Much of Thackeray's information comes from doubtful sources, often based on hearsay and supposition, published by such various writers as John Boyle, Patrick Delany, Laetitia Pilkington, Deane Swift (Swift's great-nephew), Samuel Johnson, Thomas Sheridan, or Sir Walter Scott. As a matter of fact, Thackeray's essay itself was much-quoted source for ensuing biographies, disseminating much of the lore that spins around Swift the man and author. Thus, there were scores of early biographies of Swift "each one trying to bring order out of chaos but, in the process, adding new scenarios to consider." Hence, the image of Swift the author himself seems to be indeed "a miraculous well of narrative possibilities that can be dipped from endlessly but never runs dry" (Kelly 2002, 10).

As has been mentioned, it is highly problematic to draw conclusions of any kind and of any reasonable certainty from Swift's satiric texts, be it about the author's positives or even about the author's personality, for these texts are highly strategic works written with the main purpose of deeply disturbing the reader, and thus ought not be torn readily from their tactical context. Moreover, as the scant historical information and distorted image of Swift the man derived from the struggles of his early biographers suggests, it is equally problematic to get to or even analyze the author, the person Jonathan Swift. Jonathan Swift's satiric writings as well as the mostly negative perspectives of his personality provided by his biographers have always reflected the common image of Swift as a harsh, relentless satirist, or, as with Thackeray, even as a man of bad character.

Was Swift indeed the bitter misanthrope that he in his writings and also in public often styled himself to be? As Kelly argues, it is likely that Swift was very well aware of the various public images of himself, that he seemed to have greatly enjoyed his publicity (however questionable his fame) and that he cultivated such reflections which were translated from his writings to his own personality by often leaving the assaults made by his enemies unanswered as well as by skilfully acting out the role of the eccentric in public and in his correspondence. Although Kelly runs the risk of overemphasizing Swift's carefully planned management of authorial career and the corresponding public image, the way she describes the process of mythologizing the author, which in Swift's case had doubtlessly been the case in an often rather negative way, is very telling:

> The mysteries about mythologized figures also derive from fundamental contradictions in their characters that make it impossible to know exactly who they are. These contradictions generate a dynamic dialectic of theses and antitheses that do not result in syntheses but open up new narrative possibilities. Swift obviously took delight in confusing his public image by accentuating his paradoxical or protean nature as an unchristian priest, a vulgar gentleman, an elite populist, a misanthropic philanthropist, a serious trifler, a Grubstreet Apollo, a pro-Irish Englishman. Such inconsistencies are simultaneously outraging and awe-inspiring, because they suggest that Swift successfully resists conventional definition. (2002, 7/8)

This is an interesting description indeed of the image of the author, for if we refer back to what has been stated in the present study on Swift's major satires, we may draw the conclusion that the image of Swift the author is very Tubbian, too, and shares basic features with his fundamental model or vehicle for satire, the Tub. There have been very many biographers of Swift; and they all tried to cope, to varying degrees of success, with the fact that the image of Swift the author is based on paradox, like the image of the Tub, like his satiric writings. It is conceivable that Swift very well knew this, and that he took delight in nurturing such confusion. If this be the case, it would not only be Swift's readers who project an image from his satiric writings on Swift the man, thus producing the image of Swift the author, but it would be Swift himself, too, who transfers his basic satiric strategies from his writings to the cultivation of his public image.

As Kelly concludes, Swift's major satiric writings and the abundance and perseverance of all the lore about Swift's life and character "testify to Swift's power to fire the imagination" (2002, 4). Due to the process of mythologizing and self-mythologizing, initiated and stimulated by early biographical criticism as well as Swift himself, Swift's personal as well as literary reputation paid a heavy price. Mythologizing has coined the Tubbian image of Swift the author to this day.

Attempt at Demythologizing: Swift, Paradox, and Fideistic Scepticism

> From not the gravest of Divines,
> Accept for once some serious Lines.[85]

It is very difficult to discern any positive norm in Swift's satiric writings. Swift's epistemology is negative, almost entirely focusing on the human disposition to commit error. As Rawson states,

> In Swift [...] embarrassment is radical: it is a moral rather than an aesthetic thing, and is the due response to the rough edges and subversions of a style whose whole nature it is to undermine certainties, including the certainties it consciously proclaims. (1995, 35)

In Swift's paradoxical satirical world, error seems too persistent, pessimism too harsh, and madness too exuberant to accommodate orthodoxy. In the face of hyperbolic display of vices which paradoxically leaves the battlefield to the abusers, there is only one certainty: the reader's epistemological struggles and his quest for possible meanings. Swift's satires require scepticism rather than reason, scepticism even rather than faith.

Thus, it has now become necessary to exit the Tubbian realm of satire and to study, for once, some "serious Lines" by Swift. Despite his not being the "gravest of Divines," such lines are mostly to be found in Swift's clerical writings. Swift's correspondence also tells us much about his views and attitudes, although, of course, he loved to cultivate a distinctly ironic tone in his letters. In his famous letter to Alexander Pope, written before the publication of *Gulliver's Travels* in autumn 1725, he argues as follows:

> [...] when you think of the world, give it one lash the more at my Request. I have ever hated all Nations, Professions, and Communities; and all my love is towards Individuals; for Instance, I hate the Tribe of Lawyers, Physicians [...] Soldiers, English, Scotch, French, and the rest. But principally I hate and detest that animal called Man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth. This is the system upon which I have governed myself many Years [...] and so I shall go on until I have done with them. I have got Materials toward a Treatise, proving the falsity of that Definition, *Animal rationale* and to show that it should be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of Misanthropy (although not in Timon's Manner) the whole building of my *Travels* is erected; and I will never have Peace of Mind until all honest Men are of my Opinion [...]. (*Corr.* III 1, 8)

[85] Jonathan Swift, "Stella's Birth-day, 1727" (*Poems* II 764).

There have been many among Swift's readers and critics who judged him to be a misanthrope; and what Swift offers here is a more precise definition of such reputed misanthropy, a telling description of the Swiftian kind, as it were. First of all, Swift's misanthropy differs from Timon's, representing the genuine hater of man and subject of works by Shakespeare of Lucian, in that it is not focused on individual man. It is in this context interesting to observe how Swift makes the distinction between individual and society. Swift claims to love individual personalities but to hate human society. Such at least is the posture he likes himself to be perceived in, although such claims seem not quite compatible with his own engagement in social welfare, such as his donating a considerable amount of what he earned as Dean of St. Patrick to the Dublin poor (especially destitute old women) or willing most of his fortune to found the first mental hospital in Ireland, St. Patrick's Hospital (opened in 1746), which still exists today. Accounts of Swift's charity as provided by Patrick Delany or Laetitia Pilkington corroborate Swift's claim to love individuals. Laetitia Pilkington, biographer of a somewhat special sort, who collected her personal memories of Swift, accounts that Swift fired his footman for being rude and rejecting an old woman's petition:

> His Footman happened to come to the Door, and the poor Creature besought him in a piteous Tone, to give that Paper to his Reverence. The Servant read it, and told her with infinite Scorn, his Master had something else to mind than her Petition. "What's that you say, Fellow," said the Dean, looking out at the Window, "Come up here." The Man trembling obey'd him: he also desired the poor Woman to come before him, made her sit down, and ordered her some Bread and Wine; after which he turned to the Man, and said: […] "Sirrah, you have been admonish'd by me for Drunkenness, idling, and other Faults, but since I have discovered your inhuman Disposition, I must dismiss you from my Service." (III 78/79)

Swift often went for a walk around the Liberty, his domain of jurisdiction around St. Patrick's Cathedral, speaking and exchanging witticisms with people in the lanes and alleys. According to his friend Delany, Swift's true mistresses were the poor women selling all kinds of little goods in the streets of Dublin:

> One of these mistresses sold plumbs; another, hob-nails; a third, tapes; a fourth, ginger-bread; a fifth, knitted; a sixth, darned stockings; and a seventh, cobbled shoes: and so on, beyond my counting. […] One of these mistresses wanted an eye: another a nose: a third, an arm: a fourth, a foot […] He saluted them with all becoming kindness: asked them how they did, how they throve: what stock they had? etc. […] If any of their ware were such, as he could possibly make use of, or pretend to make use of, he

> always bought some: and paid for every half-penny-worth, at least six-pence: and for every penny-worth, a shilling. If their saleables were of another nature, he added something to their flock: with strict charges of industry and honesty. (132/133)

Hence, Swift seems to have cared about people in need around his Liberty; and it can be stated that he generally enjoyed socialising with people who were his social inferiors. Delany's note that Swift even overpaid for these women's wares (which stands in stark contrast to his usual thriftiness) intends to make this point quite clear. According to Delany, Swift even named some of his "mistresses," "for distinction's sake, and partly for humour": "Cancerina, Stumpa-nympha, Pullagowna, Fritterilla, Flora, Stumpantha" (133). Ehrenpreis offers a perceptive characterization of such Swiftian kindness to humble people: "For the anecdotes of his pride or violence we look normally to his friendship with ministers and peers; for peaks at his soft-heartedness we turn to his uncelebrated service to forgotten acquaintances." He concludes that Swift "deliberately chose to seem arrogant with persons whom most men treated ceremoniously; and he often became gentle or considerate with those whom he could best afford to offend" (II 551). In addition to all of this, Swift's taking up of the Irish cause in his *Drapier's Letters* of 1724, where he defended Ireland against English abuses and earned the admiration of his fellow-Irishmen, as well as the fact that Swift had a wide circle of friends, both suggest that the charge of misanthropy indeed asks for closer scrutiny.

As Swift tells in his letter to Pope, his anger and hatred is directed against groupings of men such as political parties, military divisions, social classes and professional unions, including all their hierarchical structures and power systems. These constitute the Modern predicament and estrangement from the original situation of man. Swift's argument is, apparently, based on the notion that if a man does not act in his original, naturally human state, but as a professional, a member of certain social classes or political parties, he is at great risk of losing his qualities as a human being. In politics, as Ehrenpreis argues,

> The polarization [into Whigs and Tories] that horrified Swift was what would become the mark of democratic government a century later; for he wished to avoid conflicts based on ideology, and he condemned the idea of a team of men pledging themselves to capture the vehicle of government and drive it as they liked. The Whig and Tory clusters, which in both these tendencies were unlike older groupings, had by the same token a continuity of life that enabled them at length to absorb the rest. (II 117)

It is exactly such despotic "absorbing the rest" that Swift attacks in his satires. In such a context, man becomes the mere tool of a power system which is

larger than his individual self and in Swift's view too far removed from original humanity.

Yet, what makes Swift's vision in fact look much less optimistic than many contemporaries' is that even such an original or natural state of man in Swift is not an ideal either, but the fallen nature of mankind. Still, as Swift emphasizes, he does not hate this human characteristic in individuals, but he wants to force his audience to perceive what he considers man's real nature. In Swift's view, human nature has been imperfect from the very beginning. As a moralist and man of the cloth he inherited the Christian tradition of man being inherently corrupt and the original sin of pride being the main cause of all evil. As Walsh puts it, "Swift believed that man is fallen, and may aspire to (though he may never finally achieve) virtue only through the Christian moral law, and the promise of future rewards and punishments" (2003, 166). Such is Swift's moral heritage, for as a conservative he is by far more embedded in ancient and traditional 17th-century than 18th-century thinking; and here lies another reason why Swift was so much reviled by some scholars, especially those who started to endorse new, more positive and optimistic views of human nature. During the 18th century, intellectuals such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau or the third Earl of Shaftesbury, a prominent Deist, were declaring the basic goodness and benevolence of mankind; and the first medieval sin, pride, so much attacked and satirized in Swift, found itself in the process of being promoted as a desirable quality and basis of Modern individualism.

To return to human reason: famously, Swift denied mankind's characteristic of being a reasonable animal and replaced *reasonable* by the term *capable of reason*: *animal rationale* turns to *animal rationis capax*. Swift's point is that man is simply not able to be a purely reasonable animal: it never was, never is and never will be the case that men's actions are guided by reason alone. The discrepancy between ideal and reality runs deep, and, if taken to the limit, leads to dehumanization or even hatred of everything human, as Swift states in his letter to Pope and Bolingbroke of the same year:

> I tell you after all I do not hate Mankind, it is *vous autres* who hate them, because you would have them reasonable Animals, and are angry at being disappointed: I have always rejected that Definition, and made another of my own. I am no more angry with - - - than I was with the Kite that last Week flew away with one of my Chickens; and yet I was pleased when one of my servants shot him two days after. (*Corr.* III 1, 18)

Those who glorify human reasonableness and put man into the position of a rational creature are the ones who run the risk of turning into misanthropes, for their hopes are bound to be disappointed.

However, the choice man has, his capability of using reason, is meant positively and does not form a wholly negative concept. Not to accept man's nature would mean being proud. The original sin of pride is a common target in Swift, although Swift himself often falls victim to its lures, albeit it only in playful, boasting demonstrations of his literary genius. This literary genius and

exuberance in Swift's satires is at odds with the sober tone and style in Swift's religious writings, in which Swift to many modern readers must appear "an awkwardly conservative and conventional thinker" (Walsh 2003, 161).

Such is the paradox that accounts for much of the fascination in Swift. Yet, every paradox provokes the search for another context in which it might make sense. J. T. Parnell, who looks upon Swift as a prominent member of the tradition of fideistic scepticism, sees in paradox a typical trait of sceptical argument (223). The rhetoric of scepticism consists of "an exuberant heaping up of pros and cons at the extreme poles of debate on vexed issues" without providing the reader with any solution (Parnell 227). The reader remains puzzled, he is finally left in suspense, because he is denied any certainties or authorial resolution. Christian fideistic scepticism was devised in this manner to create circularity and doubt in the argument of an opponent and it was deeply rooted in a long tradition stemming from Greek philosophy and St. Paul. In the religious controversies that sprung up with the Reformation, fideistic writers tended to lure their opponents into the Ancient Pyrrhonist problem of the "criterion," that is, of "trying to establish an unquestionable standard of true knowledge" (Popkin 242). The sceptical method was generally used in religious disputes well into the eighteenth century and made scepticism a ready strategy, "a tempting weapon for the orthodox to use against enthusiasts" (Reilly 212). Possible models for the satiric strategy of fideistic scepticism, highly appreciated by Swift, included such writers as Erasmus, Rabelais, Cervantes or Montaigne (Parnell 221). However, the ultimate self-contradiction in fideistic scepticism is a consequence of its orthodox purpose: sceptical rhetoric is paradoxically designed to serve dogmatic aims (Parnell 227).

As has been shown, such dogmatic ends are mostly implied through their absence in Swift's satires, hence the graphic hollowness of the Swiftian satiric arch-model, the Tub, the absence of a centre, and the Tub's "Rotation" (*Tale* 40), or the meeting of mad extremes. In addition to undermining the enemy's stance, every sceptical attack ultimately proceeds to question any belief, including the doctrine for the defence of which it was initially composed. Scepticism not only discerns weak points in religious views, but also in rational human frameworks. Newtonian science, for instance, is restricted to a description of what "men of reason" believe to be true; its conclusions can never be satisfactorily justified and therefore, it cannot identify what is necessarily true (Popkin 248). Fideistic scepticism attacks standards of reasoning and measurement, and is designed to "make men humble and obedient, and keep them from new-fangled false doctrines" (Popkin 242). In his discussion of Menippean satire, Blanchard characterizes this scepticist objective as follows:

> If Menippean satire portrays a fundamentally foolish and irrational world in which certainty gives way to contingency, it does not, however, lack a theological or psychological solution to the dilemma of scepticism. Precisely because it universalizes the notion of role-playing it provides a moral or religious framework by which the

> reader may discover a human stance that may not resolve the irrationality of the world but that does at least make that world endurable. Menippean satire is far from being pessimistic in its pronouncements on intellectual certainty; it is, on the contrary, optimistic in its exercise of the freedom to question certainty, since certainty can itself be understood as a form of philosophical despotism. (42)

Yet, in satire expressing fideistic scepticism, the questioning of one certainty is strategically meant to lead to endorsement of another: belief. For sceptics like Swift or later writers such as Laurence Sterne, Christian scepticism "sought refuge from human uncertainty in the rock of faith." In fideistic scepticism, the *via dubitantis* figures thus as the highway to faith:

> Swift shared this distrust of moral reason, and grounding of knowledge in faith or revelation, with many contemporaries. The consequence of their belief might seem to us paradoxical. The unreliability of human knowledge is taken by Swift to point not (as a more modern radical scepticism might conclude) to an absolute relativity, an epistemological sea of shifting sands, but to the overriding need for all in society to accept existing institutions, political as well as religious. (Walsh 2003, 169)

Irony and satire operate in a strategically very similar way to form the reader's consciousness in terms of "the way, not the truth" (Traugott 1992, 163). As Popkin notes, all that the targeted victims of a sceptical attack can offer is their subjective points of view, and "any attempt to justify these would lead either to an infinite regress or to circular reasoning" (242). It is interesting to note that both cases are to be found in Swift's *Tale of a Tub*: there is the circular reasoning of the Hack, of Peter and Jack, and there is also Martin's infinite regress.

In my opinion, the objectives of fideistic scepticism may indeed very well be prominent parts of Swift's aims and attitudes as exhibited in his major polemical writings. In this sense, Swift's fideistic scepticism leads to "reliance on traditional wisdom when all is uncertain" (Reilly 214). To turn from satire to some of Swift's "serious Lines": In his sermon "On the Trinity", Swift gives a telling definition of his beliefs about the nature of faith:

> Therefore I shall again repeat the Doctrine of the Trinity, as it is positively affirmed in Scripture: That God is there expressed in three different Names, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Ghost; that each of these is God, and that there is but one God. But this Union and Distinction are a Mystery utterly unknown to Mankind.

> This is enough for any good Christian to believe in this great Article, without ever inquiring any farther: And, this can be contrary to no Man's Reason, although the Knowledge of it is hid from him. […]
> There are two Conditions that may bring a Mystery under Suspicion. First, When it is not taught and commanded in Holy writ; or, secondly, When the Mystery turns to the Advantage of those who preach it to others. (*PW* IX 162)

Swift the preacher recommends the supremacy of faith over reason, preferring traditional belief in what is written in Scripture over questioning its precepts. For Swift, unlike, for example, the Deists, "human reason on its own can never be an adequate authority" (Walsh 2003, 168).[86] In his clerical writings, thus outside satire and its Tubbian structure, Swift strongly objects to and warns of the great danger of religious disputes and reasoning which "beget Scruples that have perplexed the Minds of many sober Christians, who otherwise could never have entertained them" (*PW* IX 160). This leads to another basic paradox in Swift, for in his satires he doubtlessly perplexes and disturbs. Yet, Swift makes it clear that it is by no means reason *per se* that he damns, but the attempt at explaining faith by using the tools of reasoned investigation: "It is an old and true Distinction, that Things may be above our Reason without being contrary to it" (*PW* IX 164). Hence, Swift does not attack reason, but first the human claim of being guided by reason only, of thus

[86] Thus, unsurprisingly, John Locke is much more confident in the use and empirical application of human reason, although he, too, puts certain limits on the usefulness and necessity of rational scrutiny of matters religious and makes it, in some parts, dependent on intuitive knowledge:

> Though GOD has given us no innate *Ideas* of himself; though he has stamped no original Characters on our Minds, wherein we may read his Being: yet having furnished us with those Faculties, our Minds are endowed with, he hath not left himself without witness: since we have Sense, Perception, and Reason, and cannot want a clear proof of him, as long as we carry our selves about us. Nor can we justly complain of our Ignorance in this great Point, since he has so plentifully provided us with the means to discover, and know him, so far as is necessary to the end of Being, and the great concernement of our Happiness. But though this be the most obvious Truth that Reason discovers; and though its Evidence be (if I mistake not) equal to mathematical Certainty: yet it requires Thought and Attention; and the Mind must apply itself to a regular deduction of it from some part of our intuitive Knowledge, or else we shall be as uncertain, and ignorant of this, as of other Propositions, which are in themselves capable of clear Demonstration.
> To shew therefore, that we are capable of *knowing*, i.e. *being certain that there is a GOD*, and how we may come by this certainty, I think we need go no farther than our selves, and that undoubted Knowledge we have of our own Existence (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding* X, 1, 619).

According to Locke, whenever the principles of reason and "intuitive Knowledge" are ignored, the way is open to sectarian extremes. Hence, Locke develops the concept of a religion which exposes the reasonable and the intuitively cognizable.

being a "rational" being, and second the application of reason in matters religious:

> *First*, It would be well, if People would not lay so much Weight on their own Reason in Matters of Religion, as to think every thing impossible and absurd which they cannot conceive. How often do we contradict the right Rules of Reason in the whole Course of our Lives? *Reason* itself is true and just, but the *Reason* of every particular Man is weak and wavering, perpetually swayed and turned by his Interests, his Passions, and his Vices. Let any Man but consider, when he hath a Controversy with another, although his Cause be ever so unjust, although the World be against him, how blinded he is by the Love of himself, to believe that Right is Wrong, and Wrong is Right, when it maketh for his own Advantage. Where is then the right Use of his Reason, which he so much boasteth of, and which he would blasphemously set up to controul the Commands of the Almighty? (*PW* IX 166)

Again, we have come across the conflict at the very core of Swift's double functions as satirist and as preacher: the incompatibility of the realms of faith and of reason, both of which Swift greatly respects and admires, but cannot or would not attempt to merge. In this context, it is always necessary to remind ourselves of Swift's deep-rooted conservatism when turning from his satires to his religious writings, for the radicalism and parody of his satires would sometimes almost lure us into an interpretation of Swift as a modern democrat and pluralist, which of course is completely out of place. Swift's claim of the incompatibility of reason and faith becomes clearer in his description of the vanity of the application of the tools of scientific investigation and abstraction on religious mystery found especially in Deist works such as John Toland's *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696), and the resultant disputes and controversies:

> *Lastly*, Since the World abounds with pestilent Books, particularly written against the Doctrine of the Trinity; it is fit to inform you, that the Authors of them proceed wholly upon a Mistake: They would shew how impossible it is that *Three* can be One, and *One* can be Three; whereas the Scripture saith no such Thing, at least in that manner they would make it: But, only, that there is some kind of Unity and Distinction in the Divine Nature, which Mankind cannot possibly comprehend: Thus, the whole Doctrine is short and plain, and in itself incapable of any Controversy; since God himself hath pronounced the Fact, but wholly concealed the Matter. And therefore many Divines who thought fit to answer those wicked Books, have been mistaken too, by answering Fools in their Folly; and

> endeavouring to explain a Mystery which God intended to keep secret from us. (*PW* IX 167)

Swift considered such reasoning to be a serious threat:

> Those strong Unbelievers, who expect that all Mysteries should be squared and fitted to their own Reason" engage in vain disputes which "whatever they pretend, will destroy their inward Peace of Mind, by perpetual Doubts and Fears arising in their Breasts. (*PW* IX 167)

Paradoxically, this is a very neat description of the workings of fideistic scepticism, directed against investigators-gone-astray, "answering Fools in their Folly." In addition, there are more than just a few instances when the readers of Swift's satires find themselves in exactly such a predicament: the impression of "Doubts and Fears arising in their Breasts" is constituent of the Tubbian strategy of reader entrapment.

Hence, this is another angle from which the paradoxical nature of Swift's Tub can be perceived: Swift aims at beating his opponents by use of their own weapons; a dangerous venture indeed. In relation to the concept of fideistic scepticism, Swift's warnings of misapplication of reason to religious disputes seem indeed scarcely compatible with the universally subversive character of Swiftian satire, a price that brilliant parody of the enemy has to pay. If Swift's satiric attacks on religious corruptions, abuses and wilful misinterpretations are indeed paradoxically designed to embrace and defend traditional, doctrinal views, it is clear that such subversive attacks as found in Swift's satiric works may easily be reversed and directed against the very foundation from which they were started. Swift's satires, and his *Tale* as a prominent instance, with its religious allegory of the interpretation of Scripture, express an aspect of scepticism that is without doubt more subversive than a simple defence of the Anglican faith Swift embraces in his clerical writings would allow. Even if Swift intended the Tub's empty form to illustrate the absence and ultimate virtue of the Anglican *via media* as well as "the vanity of human-based attempts to achieve certainty without reference to God" (Parnell 236), its paradoxical character, and the danger of attacking fundamental principles of faith, remains.

Swift was aware of the danger of his use of satire. As a matter of fact, he had to be, for satire did not prove to be beneficial to his career and reputation, far from it. Most famously, his ecclesiastical preferment in England, which he had always had in mind and expected for himself, was probably denied him on the grounds of his polemical prose. Swift's literary genius brought him fame as a political pamphleteer and satirist, but it debarred him from other favourable stations in the world he would have wished himself to achieve. Swift realized this, and it added to his disappointment. Swift's position as a satirist is perhaps not altogether unlike the one of the "wicked Man" described in "The Difficulty of Knowing One's Self," sermon attributed to Swift:

> Thus nothing is more common than to see a wicked Man running headlong into Sin and Folly, against his Reason […]. Tell him, what he is going to do will be an infinite Disparagement […] tell him that it will blacken his Reputation, which he had rather die for than lose […] And yet for all this, he shuteth his Eyes against all Conviction, and rusheth into the Sin, like a Horse into the Battle. (*PW* IX 354)[87]

Satire and sin form an inextricable pair: satire's aim is to expose and attack sin; at the same time, it studies the ways of sin, thus gets paradoxically embedded in sinful realms. In other words: satire, by way of showing the worst sins conceivable in order to pillory them, to a certain extent itself becomes sin. There is something in Swift that suggests he enjoys the destructive power of satire to such an extent as to become, at least temporarily, oblivious of his actual cause, leading to satiric "overspill," (Rawson 1983, 58) with the author's eyes wide open. In addition, it is this practice that accounts for much of the fascinating exuberance in Swift, as well as for his rather damaged public reputation. Swift the man knew the importance of his public image, but Swift the satirist also in turns damaged it, and so, however directly, contributed to being mythologized in public. As Ehrenpreis states,

> We must ask how Swift might have preferred this guidance to the judgement born of his own observation. […] Obviously, to find glory or preferment, one should first have identified oneself with the leader of an active party in literature, the church, or the government, and should have studied to make oneself appear indispensable. If one neither contributed to controversy, nor brought lustre to a patron's name, nor did draught-horse work for a party project, nor caught the affection of a great, great personage, the road up was an impasse. Swift could have written on the Convocation affair; he could have defended the Trinity; he could have glorified the Peace of Ryswick; he could have dedicated to somebody other than the king. But he chose not to. (I 262/263)

In my opinion, this is as close as one can get to inner conflict in Swift, be it concerning Swift the man or his satirical writings. It accounts for many features in Swift's writings and in Swift's life. Swift used pointed satire, gift, weapon, and curse (to him alike) in order to defend faith, yet had to acknowledge that the same tool should not be applied to religious matters. Swift used satire in order to defend values which could easily be damaged themselves by a single stroke of the same satirical sort. Swift adopted a style which would have

[87] Authorship of this sermon is not certain. It was found in a bundle with Swift's others and supposed to be in Swift's hand. The complete passage even says "against his Reason, against his Religion, and against his God," but I would find it misguided to go this far in my description of the destructiveness of Swift's satire.

better suited the polemic of a political pamphleteer (which of course he was) than a priest (which of course he was, too). Although calling himself, ironically, "not the gravest of Divines" (*Poems* II 764), Swift was determined and felt the great need to be promoted in the Church and be favourably considered by influential people he offered his services to. Yet, he insulted these or the same kind of people in building his fame on the foundation of satire. Any, however vain, attempt to demythologize Swift must clearly perceive how deeply these dilemmas run in Swift and how Tubbian the paradox.

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CONCLUSION

> But, how to analyze the *Tub*, was a Matter of difficulty; when after long Enquiry and Debate, the literal Meaning was preserved. (*Tale* 41)

It is somewhat problematic to conclude a study on such a kinetic device as Jonathan Swift's satiric strategy and technique of reader entrapment, for it means securing a mechanism that due to its Tubbian nature openly refuses to stop spinning. The paradox of morality implied but hardly ever stated in satire driven to extremes by Swift's restless literary vigour and Tubbian strategy has kept on drawing readers into entrapment; and it is needless to say that Swift's satire will not cease offering extensive scope for literary analysis.

My reader-response approach to Swift tries to show that Swift's satiric writings are primarily designed to entrap their readers. Such a predominant aim of reader entrapment puts the focus of satire much more on process than on active teaching of a moral lesson. Swift's satire is employed to fling the reader out "an empty *Tub*, by way of Amusement, to divert him" (*Tale* 41). In other words, Swift the satirist is mainly interested in the ways of artfully setting his traps and not in mere conveyance of moral truths. To finally find some insight is left up to the reader. In this study, I called the nature and strategy of reader entrapment in Swift Tubbian, referring to basic features of satire in Swift presented in his programmatic image of the Tub, standing both for satire and consequent reader entrapment in Swift and developed in his first great satire, *A Tale of a Tub*.

There are various Tubbian characteristics in Swift. Swift's satire is "given to Rotation;" it is "hollow" and empty;" it is "noisy, and wooden;" and, last but not least, it diverts its readers "by way of Amusement" (*Tale* 40). Hence, the most prominent features are a sense of instability due to a constant shifting of stances and perspectives ("spinning"), an extremist nature and simultaneous attack of extremism, thus parody and paradox stemming from a basic circularity of method (the form of the Tub); emptiness, that is, absence of the author by employment of satiric *personae*, and a consequent vacuum of values in which the reader is entrapped and forced to make his own decisions; materiality or physicality, the satiric technique of deflation by way of physical defamiliarization; and, very importantly, diversionary intention, catching the interest of, and confusing, the reader by a heaping up of multitudes of perspectives, bits of information and eccentricities.

Physical defamiliarization as well as experimenting with size and proportion prompts the reader to perceive, through shock-satirical vision, the satirist's sense of the true reality of all proud notions and attitudes. Hence, all arguments will end up in vicious circles. In Swift's satire, the champion has paradoxically left the stage, which completely belongs to the exuberance of

his opponents' error and madness. This Swiftian strategy creates the structurally ironic tension that makes the reader perceive the error behind the *persona*'s proud ambitions. Structural irony forces the text to register its own insufficiency in an endless shifting, or floating, between inconsistent and opposing stances in a vain attempt at effective literal or figurative interpretation. The false satirical reality is thus entangled in its own paradoxical stances without visible authorial invention.

In both its strategic form and its content Swiftian reader entrapment exhibits a fundamental paradoxical trait. Swift brilliantly participates in precisely those exuberant and frenzied creative processes that his narrative exposes as the causes of Modern madness and which he satirically advises his audience to avoid. Hence, the satirical "negative" is dominant in Swift; destructive rhetoric in Swift's satires is often so overwhelming that its function runs the risk of being interpreted as universally subversive.

In addition to this, as recent criticism suggests, Swift also followed his Tubbian strategy in having people construct, to what extent intentionally and consciously remains to be debated, his public image as author and man by taking up different roles, also in the underlying attempt to unite incompatible positions and functions he ambitiously intended to achieve, leading to paradox: Swift the former-Whig-turned-Tory, the satirist and clergyman, the vulgar elitist, the linguistic conservative engaged in free and wild linguistic experimentation and punning, the misanthropic Augustan, the English Irishman, etc. The consequent mythologizing of Swift not only impedes a reliable or correct image of Swift the man, but also makes it even more demanding to reconstruct authorial lines for his satires.

Yet, in spite of its complexity and the seeming satirical lack of a positive or norm, Swift's satire is devised to provoke the reader's engagement in its self-contradiction and paradox and to instigate a search for a way out of its abusive mazes. Swift's technique of entrapment prompts the reader's vigilance and scepticism; the text therefore requires the exercise of the reader's faculties of discrimination and judgement.

The aggressive complexity of Swift's rhetoric indeed seems to be ample reason for dislike and interpretative pessimism; and it may give, in Swift's own words, "your Head some gentle Raps; Only [to] make it Smart a While" (*Complete Poems* 521). There is a Swiftian pun on the double meaning of "smart" here: "hurt" and "intelligent," that is. Hence, intelligence or insight acquired through painful experience is the uncompromising satiric prescription Swift offers. Swift seldom loses sight of his basic goal, even in his darkest moments, which is to stimulate such critical awareness. Thus, enough emphasis cannot be put on such "dynamics of satire", on intellectual process, when reading Swift; and it is one of the main points of my study to show that if the reader manages to free himself from futile expectations of coherence in the face of Swift's traps, it becomes possible to provide a reading of Swift that is far from being pessimistic. This is not to say that Swift believed in the effectiveness of his satires to teach readers a moral lesson. Swift says "Smart *a While*": the effect of Tubbian entrapment is temporary, an expression of the satiric intention to create awareness, be it only for a moment.

However, Swiftian ironies are at times allowed free play, separated from or actually gone beyond moral concerns, exposing the reader to their pitiless character. Many readers and critics have construed images of Swift as a severe moralist or misanthropist; to no satisfactory result in either case, for they miss the very Tubbian nature and intention of Swift's technique. Reading Swift includes considering the author's intention as a moralist, thinking about underlying moral stances, absent though they be in the world of satiric error and madness Swift presents his readers with. Yet, this does not account for the character of Swift's captivating satiric prose. Swift enjoys bewildering his readers, overwhelming them with his mad satiric exuberance and leaving them alone to think their way out of his cunningly constructed Tubbian traps.

The fundamental nature of Swift's technique of reader entrapment is to lead the satirized arguments into their coherent conclusion and beyond, to extremes, so that the reader is forced to enter the realms of the absurd and cope with Swift's satire, which is excessive, shocking, unfair, and amusing. By way of entrapment in the impossibility of making a good choice, Swift is not only able to "vex the world rather then divert it" but also to indirectly meet the satiric goal that he himself (with ironic regard to the rather austere nature of his major satires) calls to "*wonderfully* mend the World" (*Corr.* 87). It is only that Swift's Tubbian strategy of reader entrapment never makes the author do so himself, but leaves the task up to the entrapped reader. It is Swift who sets up the traps and calculates their dynamics; the rest is up to the reader.

Swift expressly describes the stage where all the satirist's endeavour ends in his poem on "The Day of Judgement", which he defines as the point where satire ends. He expresses his disappointment about the stubborn ignorance of mankind, which, in spite of effectively being bitten by his satire, will still refuse to learn. Swift finally has to recognize the limits of satire which cannot make sure its readers learn but has to leave the learning, or, rather, the awareness-building process, to the hands of the entrapped reader, with rather little authorial hope:

> The World's mad Business now is o'er,
> And I resent these Pranks no more.
> I to such Blockheads set my Wit!
> I damn such Fools! – Go, go, you're bit.
> (*Complete Poems* I 19-22)

Needless to say that this not only constitutes Swift's recognition of satire's confines, but equally an irony and self-parody of the satirist's topical indignation at man's unteachability. Yet, even if we accept the possibility of satire failing to make its didactic point because of the foolish reader's inability to work it out, there is still Swift's triumph, the reader's experience of entrapment, of being "bit" by Swift's satire. Concerning the practice of "bites," jokes and riddles, with the ladies, Swift gives the following ironic advice: "You must ask a bantering question, or tell some damned lie in a serious manner, and then she will answer, or speak as if you were in earnest: and then cry you '*Madam*, there is a *bite*'" (*Corr*. I 40). It needs to be added that the unfairness

of Swift's practice with "bites" in his satires lies in the fact that he never explains them, but triumphantly leaves his victims alone, bitten.

Reader entrapment by way of creating notions of disproportion, estranged physical and materialist vision, circularity and deceptive extremism explains the direct responses of puzzlement and animosity that Swift's satires have produced and that no doubt will continue to engender. Appreciation of the great challenge provided by Swiftian satire is based on perception of the intricate Tubbian traps Swift creates. These traps are aimed at making Jonathan Swift's readers see, on the one hand, that they are exactly those "Blockheads" he sets his wit against, forced to free themselves of entrapment, and, on the other hand, how great the satirist's literary genius.

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